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PHILIBERT.

A Poetical Romance.

IN SIX CANTOS.

LL-6-34

PHILIBERT:

A POETICAL ROMANCE.

BY

THOMAS COLLEY GRATTAN.

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TO

THE MOST NOBLE

THE

MARCHIONESS OF WATERFORD

THE FOLLOWING POEM

IS, WITH GREAT RESPECT, INSCRIBED,

BY

HER LADYSHIP'S

OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Poem was suggested by the History of the false Martin Guerre, which is the first case reported in the "Causes célèbres" *of Gayot de Pitaval.*

PHILIBERT.

CANTO FIRST.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO FIRST.

THERE is a light, which warmly breaks
O'er manhood's dawn in orient streaks,
And sheds a softened effluence round,
Through gathering passion's dark profound.

There is an air, with breath of balm,
Serenely soothing, clear, and calm;
Beneath whose gentle sighs expire
The lurid flashes of desire;
But, fanned by whose maturing gales,
Life's opening flower new sweets exhales.

Pure light, mild essence, modest love!
Foretaste of bliss from realms above;
Ethereal spirit hail to thee!
Best, brightest boon to nature given,
That want'st but immortality
To be thyself a Heaven.
And never, in this breathing sphere,
Thy influence wafted joys more dear;
Never thy mild and mellowed charm
Gave holier warmth to human form,
Than when thy inspiration fell
On PHILIBERT and ISABELLE.

Full many a mouldering pile's decay,
Since the sixth Charles in France held sway,
Has robbed the world of glorious names,
That memory from oblivion claims
In vain; or, though tradition's tongue
Their deeds in rugged praise has sung,
Its doubtful records rarely tell
More than—they lived, and that they fell:

But frequent, Time, from fostering wings,
A hallowed charm o'er lovers flings;
Their joys and griefs preserves with care,
As these—that future worlds may share,
Age after age successive flown,
The humble tale of centuries gone.

If Honor ever fixed its throne
Within a bosom all its own;
If ever on a hero's breast
Was stamped high Valour's glowing crest;
If heaven-born Love did e'er impart
A chastened ardour to the heart;
Or if, to form one perfect mind,
These godlike gifts were e'er combined—
That flower of peace—that flame of war
Was Philibert de Valombar.
The hand of Heraldry could trace,
Through many an age, his noble race;

And, following on the foot of time,
Through varied scene, and distant clime,
With high-ton'd trump, immortal Fame
Sound well-earn'd pæans to his name.
Hereditary honors shed
Their dazzling lustre round his head;
Brilliant they beamed, and brightly shone—
Until contrasted with his own—
Then lost their unimportant ray,
Like glow-worms in the blaze of day.

And she—that matchless maiden bright,
So dearly prized, so fondly loved;
His only orb of life and light,
For which alone he breath'd and mov'd—
The floating breeze of morn that sips
The dew from every floweret's lips,
As passing lightly o'er the lawn
It moves along at earliest dawn,
The very soul of purity—
Was not itself more pure than she.

'Twas not that Beauty's sorcery threw
Around the maid her magic hue;
Or formed each feature in her mould,
Or 'twined those locks of burnish'd gold;
Beauteous she was—but many a maid,
In equal symmetry arrayed,
Had vainly sought the witching charm
That sportive graced her airy form,
And gave to every look a spell,
Thought cannot frame, nor language tell.
It was that soft, retiring grace,
That radiant gem of loveliest kind,
Which sheds its lustre o'er the face
Illumined by a modest mind:
That charm which virtue only gives;
That secret spring the bosom moving;
That mental plant, whose timid leaves
'Shrink from each touch of Man's approving.

Such was the pair—if so we call
Two separate minds that blend in one,
As the Eyes' mingling glances fall
Centred in what they gaze upon.
The light that blessed his natal morn
Brightened the hour that gave her birth;
And loud response of vassal mirth
Proclaimed that both at once were born.
From the first days of earliest youth
One soul appeared to govern both;
In every playful, sportive game
Their infant projects were the same,
And every wish that one expressed
Seemed echoed from the other's breast:
While, in the lightly transient gales
That ruffled childhood's fluttering sails,
Each little varied hope and fear
Its sympathetic course would steer.

When boyhood's ardent warmth took place
Of lisping infancy's embrace,
The youthful champion seemed to
The very light of Chivalry :
In burning haste his arms to wield
The young Aspirant took the field :
With hazel lance, and paper targe,
He bore him onwards to the charge ;
Rushed 'gainst each Aspen for a foe,
And shook the trembling foliage low :
The thistle's thorny ranks in vain
Raise their sharp heads — they strew the plain,
And vanquished hosts of poppies wild
Bow crestless to the soldier child —
But, in his bold and vigourous form,
His lovely playmate's softened charm
Seemed to have mixed, with wond'rous art,
At once to fire and tame his heart.

Their fathers both, for many a year,
Had run a long and bright career;
Of equal birth, and rank the same,
By turns they held the reins of fame;
In love and war their youth was spent,
And countless joust and tournament
Their prowess saw; and oft they shared
(Prize for who best and boldest dared)
The banquet for their king prepared.
Often their valour, side by side,
In many a desperate day was tried,
When, turning war's terrific tide
As fierce the bloody torrent flowed,
Each to the other safety owed.

They mutual knew the hapless fate
To mourn a fond and faithful mate;
Left each his widowed watch to keep
Upon an only infant's sleep,

Count Walderne's brimful eyes look'd down
On the bright beauty of his son;
While, bending o'er *his* angel child
In anguish'd hope, Count Philip smil'd.
But, rousing from this gloomy mood,
Thanked Heaven that left each precious good;
And calmly sought in friendship's breast
To hush their answering sighs to rest.

Forsaking glory's dazzling road,
Whose prize was now a cumbrous load,
Each peaceful hung his battered shield,
And, in retirement's tranquil field,
From the worlds worn-out joys remote,
Doffed the bright casque and mailed coat.
Thus linked by strong and equal ties
They seemed to join their destinies;
And, twining for their offspring's brows
Of peace and hope a hallowed wreath,
Smiled on their love, and blessed the vows
That formed a bond of mutual faith.

They marked unbridled nature urge
Their charge through childhood's frothy surge;
Saw their young hearts, with lightsome bound,
Spring high from hope's enchanted ground;
Unknown the very name of woe,
One only good they seemed to know,
Together through the world to go—
Careless the path— they asked no more;
Wandering alike in plain or grove,
Equal to them—their only store
An endless, boundless dream of love.

Contiguous lay their sires' domains,
Divided by a murmuring stream;
In which the flocks that ranged the plains
Plunged from the heat of noontide's beam;
Or careless crossed the ancient ford,
And freely fed at either side,

As conscious that their several lord
No difference made, no leave denied.

The little rustic bridge between
At neither end had guard, or screen;
Nor threatning trap, nor bristling fence
To fright the fleecy wanderer thence;
And free to both, a common good,
The rivulet its course pursued.

So close the kindred castles stood
On either side a rugged dell,
That, glancing o'er its feathery wood,
The lights from the one reflected fell
On the arms of the other's centinel;
Who oft' in his silent walk might catch
The murmured sounds of the neighb'ring watch,
As the whispered password faintly falls
On the angled towers' unequal walls.

And rarely in these dungeoned towers
Passed prisoned wretch the hateful hours;
And never to the torturing stroke
Responsive groans scared Echo woke;
Nor power polluted from the source,
Impetuous rolled its sanguine course:
Each serf, in fiery boldness brave,
Scorned thousand deaths his chief to save,
Honoring the earth that formed the grave
Of him, a vassal—not a slave!
No vexing tribute, wrung from him,
Pampers a proud oppressor's whim;
He feeds no tyrant by his toil,
But freely tills a freeman's soil;
Nor fawning cringes to the hand
Of despot rule or fierce command—
Nor crawls along in reptile pace
The living stigma of his race—
But is, what Man was meant to be,
Bold—upright—liberal—frank and free.

Chiefs such as his, unfrequent found
To burst mankind's unholy bond,
Bold censors of a barbarous age,
Whose records stain th' historic page,
Were but the glimmerings of a torch
Whose flame burnt slow in reason's porch,
But flings even now, remote and weak,
Deep blushes on refinement's cheek:
For then the gloom of feudal night
Hung darkly o'er man's hallowed right;
And freedom's embers, feebly seen,
Served but to mark where light had been,
But beamed no more with radiant ray,
The guiding star to lead his way—
And blind intolerance toiling then
Fast rivetted her bigot chain;
Rank lost its pride—and power its right
While unchecked rapine stalked at night,
Law, like a dart without its barb,
Fell foiled 'gainst guilt's impervious garb;

Discord shook high her flaring brand,
And ruffian faction tore the land.

Scarce twenty summers browned his front,
When Philibert at glory's fount
Drank the deep stream. 'Tis thus we fly
O'er the gay hours of life's advance;
And turn, with slight and hurried glance,
To the varied scenes of times gone by
That sparkle bright to fancy's eye:
Nor stop to sketch the mournful joy
That burst upon the gallant boy,
When, by his father fondly led,
He viewed the glories of the dead;
And saw the noblest of the land
O'er valour's relics weeping stand,
When royalty's proud tribute paid
Its debt to great Du Guesclin's shade.

Well may we guess his bold delight
To vanquish in the mimic fight,
In Isabelle's inspiring sight—
Sternly to strike the quintin * down;
Or fiercely storm some turf-formed town;
To rush, with valour's doughty sway,
Against a Babylon of clay;
A Memphis shake with furious shock,
Or raze some flower-built Antioch!—
Or when, for friendly conquest bent,
On vespers of the tournament.
But what may tell his soul-felt thrill
When called his arduous part to fill?
And, ceded to his sire's request,
Whose honor was the youth's best gage,
They waived his yet imperfect age;

* The *quintaine* was a moveable figure, representing an armed knight, by tilting against which the youths learned to manage the lance.—See Note.

And love and valour in his breast,
By chivalry's most solemn rite
The good Count Philip dubbed him knight.
When sword and helm, and belt and spurs
Became by sacred rule his own;
And o'er his snow-white vestment thrown
The scarf—by whose fair hands? O hers
Whose blissful smile, and happy eyes,
Shone brighter than the diamond prize,
Which, when the morrow's joust was o'er,
The youthful victor proudly bore.
Unsung we leave the parting day,
When the lover, torn from home away,
Had nearly quenched in floods of woe
Ambition's warmly-struggling glow—
And the virgin grief of Isabelle,
When the wind bore back his faint farewel;
As bounding on his prancing steed
He gave him the loosened rein;
And, swift as the Indian's feathered reed,

Or the captive bird from its prison free,
He darted across the plain!

Pass we the Hero's brilliant course
And his acts of high renown,
When Bourbon, joined to Genoa's force,
With the bravest peers of France took horse
To strike the corsair down—
When the young knight waved in victory
The royal, white-cross standard high,
Rivalling de Bacqueville, glorious name,
Last bearer of the Oriflame.
Enough to tell that the blast, which bore
His triumph from Afric's frighted shore,
And the praise, which his valour won,
Was echoed loud to realms afar,
From the high towers of Valombar,
When it told that the deeds by the Father done
Were as nought to the feats of the Son!

How blest is he, by humble lot
Removed from discord's grating voice,
Deep in some wild, sequestered spot,
With friends of nature and of choice—
Yet happier still, whose fate has been
To roam through many a hostile scene;
But doomed to feel the heart's high swell,
Returned to those he loves so well—
As each long-cherished spot is traced,
Which first in infant sport he paced;
And, ecstasy supreme! to meet
The answering breast with rapture glowing,
The bosom heaving sighs so sweet—
The eye with tears of joy o'erflowing—
This is the moment that o'erpays
The feeling heart, for countless days
Of tumult past, of danger o'er,
Remembered now, but felt no more.

Yes, he *is* come, in victory's pride,
To claim his promised, plighted bride;
To fling the chaplet glory wove
An offering in the lap of love,—
And she is his—the bright reward,
Whose image edged his conquering sword;
In all the splendid charm of youth;
In all the chastened glow of truth;
Unmoved by all the world but him,
Like the wave which zephyr only stirs;
Gazing until her eyes grew dim,
And wondering how he could be hers.

For Isabelle's adopted home
Her father left his ancient dome;
But not to range a stranger's halls
He quits his old paternal walls.—
Nor did she, on that morn of joy
That moved her from her early scite,
Prove those alarms of maidens coy
Who, sadness struggling with delight,

Are borne from scenes of happy years,
Through mists of mingled smiles and tears.
She marks no pomp of formal state
Attend her at a new found gate;
No unknown concourse, curious rushes
To feast upon her virgin blushes;
No stranger-hands her ringlets deck,
Nor welcomes chill her raptures check;
But, passing through the long-loved courts,
She treads the ground of infant sports;
And glides along through grateful files
Of faces bright with heart-warm smiles;
While each gay plume of bridal flowers
Blooms freshly from her own dear bowers.

At morning frisk upon the lawn
Her hand-fed lamb, her favourite fawn;
Down on the glen she casts her look;
Her osiers drooping kiss the brook—

Upwards her glistening glances throwing,
She sees *her* roses brightly glowing—
The branching Eglantine's arcade—
The trellised arbour that she made—
The brilliant groups of the parterre
Slow-moving in the morning air,
Lovely as when she wandered there.—
She fondly waves her hand to them;
Each flower seems answering from its stem;
While her own choir, on frolic wing,
Their matin salutations sing!

Swift sped the years, and in their train
Left nought of sorrow or of pain:
Peaceful they ran, and seemed to throw
A mantle o'er the shade of woe;
While care flew by, nor dared to cast
One loathsome vapour as he passed,
But saw the Sun of pleasure shower
Its radiance on each halcyon hour.

Hours, by the gloom of Ages shaded!
Joys, distant far, but yet unfaded!
Still shining forth from Heaven on high,
Like those bright spots of blue serene,
That glimmer through the lowering sky
When storm-clouds desolate the scene.
Fountains of bliss! whose sources rise
In nature's holiest sympathies,
And rush abroad, in streams that bless
The ways of wedded happiness—
The ravished mind, in fervour glowing,
Dwells long to trace thy bright o'erflowing;
And the fluttering thought insatiate sips
The limpid sweets, its thirst to slake;
As the bird of the summer untiring dips
His wings in the warmth of a sunny lake.

One lovely pledge, with cherub smile
Clung graceful to the mother's breast;

And the fond father gazed the while,
And owned himself too blest:
While the grandsires felt, in spite of time,
Transported back to their early prime;
Yet sighed, when the looks of love they share,
To feel that one was wanting there.
But if a tear-drop sometimes stole,
Despite the aged friends' controul;
Or when a sorrowing thought turned back;
Sweeping life's bleak and withered track,
They saw bright forms of early love
Enrobed in rays of light above;
Or hovering round on seraph wing,
Heaven's blessed joys soft murmuring!

No boisterous sound the calm invades
Of Valombar's delicious shades;
Nor did the plains of wide Guienne
Hold a more blissful household then.

By the true light of virtue warmed,
A unity of peace they formed:
In wise retirement's tempered sport
Their quiet hours untainted move;
And need no loose, voluptuous court
To regulate their round of love*—
But, gathered by the winter's blaze,
To circle in the high-heaped fire;
(While lively page, or amorous squire
Recounts strange tales of other days,
And hostile banners, floating o'er,
Attest the battle-feats of yore)—
From the summer's sultry glow to rove
The sheltered covert of the grove;
To smooth the peasant's rigid fate;
To feed the pilgrim at the gate;

* For an account of *la Cour amoureuse* see Note X to this Canto.

On the terraced walk to list the swell
Of the neighbouring convent's vesper bell,
Or the soothing lute of Isabelle—
To rest in peace, and rise in joy;
A life of love their sole employ.

Mingling their voices' blended sounds,
Slow wandering through the castle grounds,
Or as the song of the Rossignol,*
In mockery of art's controul,
Thrilled through each fibre of the soul,—
Oft' in the cool of eve assembling,
Their loitering footsteps loved to stray;
Till the moon's bright smile, on the river trembling,
Warned the unwilling group away—
For never yet a chaster gleam
Bathed its soft ray in lovelier stream,
Than when autumnal moonbeams shone
On thy mild bosom, clear Dordogne!

* The Nightingale.

And never yet did fairy feet
On greener sod light measures beat,
Nor sallied forth their pigmy ranks,
For midnight freak, on sweeter banks.

And frequent, at those blissful times,
Would Philibert in artless rhymes
The rural charms around them sing;
While Isabelle the tuneful string
Accordant touched; and the old sires,
Warming with youth's rekindled fires,
Would fondly listen on the way
To this, their favourite roundelay.

Roundelay.

Brightly beams the placid sky;
Softly smiles the moon on high;
Sparkling dances every star
That shoots its lucent light afar;

All above looks blithe and gay—
Let not mortals then below,
A single shade of gloom betray,
Reproaches on the Heavens to throw.

Nature speaks in simple tones
That modest echo sweetly owns;
Then let not man's presumptuous string
In loftier strain its warblings fling—
When friendship's honest vows we breathe
They need not flow from roseate bowers;
And if affection twine the wreath
No matter where she culls the flowers.

Long had the muse slow-lingering hung
Enraptured on a theme like this—
The sweetest e'er by Poet sung,
Love—Friendship—Virtue—forms of bliss!

Associate shades, whose union bright
Blends in one arch of soft delight,
But vapours blur each heavenly hue,
Which melts dissolving from her view—
And now, farewel ye scenes of peace;
Now song of humble transport cease!
Henceforth the unharmonious lyre
Must strike a more discordant string;
See 'frighted joy in sighs expire,
And hope expand the fluttering wing—
Woe, tumult, treachery, war I sing!

END OF CANTO FIRST.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO SECOND.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO SECOND.

SLOW swells the requiem's measured tone;
Deep sounds the muffled mourners' groan;
Sad, on the dark grave's rugged verge,
The pale monks chaunt the funeral dirge;
Faint flickerings from the half-quenched torch
Flash through the cold sepulchral arch,
Which seems its dank, chill tears to shed
In sorrow o'er the buried dead.

Piercing the thickening depth of night,
The vault shoots forth its gleamy light;
As the sad monks their vigils keep,
The organ peals the anthem deep;
While, rising on the midnight air,
High mounts the blessed voice of prayer,
And, at each pause, the holy song
In awful chorus rolls along.

Funeral Anthem.

Rest thee in peace, illustrious son,
Ennobler of a noble line;
The conflict o'er—the battle won,
The victory is thine!
Rest, till that day when thy dark tomb
Re-opening bursts its bounds;
When, summoning to thy endless doom,
The last loud trumpet sounds—

And thy purged soul shall glorious rise,
A stream of splendour on the highest skies—
Rest thee in peace!

And who was he that the tomb
Wraps in its shroud of gloom?
For whom does the passing knell
Toll the world's last farewel?
Why do the stately tapers burn,
As the solemn mass is said;
What sinner's soul from earth has fled,
That thus in pious pomp they mourn!
Mark on yon' blanched yet lovely cheek,
The tears which the heart's dumb sorrow speak;
Mark that bent form, whose searching eye
Would pierce the grave's dark boundary;
Mark him whose manly cares repress
The daughter's grief—the friend's distress—

Then ask not what insensate clay,
In proud mortality's decay,
Even while they watch it rots away.

Scarce was the last sad service read,
And the household's sleepless couches spread,
When, ushering in a cheerless morn,
Loud at the portal sounds the horn.
Up Isabelle! thy orphan sighs
Are joy to what thou now must know;
Dash the salt tear drops from thine eyes,—
For thy dead sire they fitly flow,
But suit not with thy coming woe.
Rouse, rouse thee, Philibert! no more
Entwined in love's embraces lie—
Thy dream of tranquil pleasure oer,
Again to war thy steps must hie.
Quick from the breathless courier's hand
He snatched the brief, but firm command
" Count Philibert! prepare thy band

For Hungary, with speed,
To aid King Sigismond's array.—
Even now may France's warriors bleed
Beneath the Turk—away!
With my own hand, and signet ring,
Thy friend—I Charles the King."

Swift as the heav'n-wing'd lightning's flash,
Darts fire from Philibert's dark eye's lash—
Bold as the cataract's rushing flood,
Springs to his glowing cheek the blood—
No time is lost—no word he speaks;
But as one with wonder dumb,
The royal seal from the scroll he breaks,
And quick beneath the sovereign's sign
Writes rapid one short hurried line—
"Courage, my liege, I come!"

Scarce has the courier's parched lip quaffed,
In panting haste, the copious draught,
When a fresh steed's at the gates;
Fly courier! fly—no moment lose—
For though no savage foe pursues,
'Tis a monarch's self that waits.

But while, for an instant's pause, his foot
In the stirrup's rest he stoops to put,
To the groom a word he throws—
"Grudge not, my friend, your stable's cheer
"To the noble beast that bore me here."
"Master, your kindly caution spare—
"Your gallant courser needs no care,
"For see, his heart-broke body there
"Lies carrion for the crows."

Four leagues there stands from Valombar
A hill, from whose high top, afar
You see the Castle tower;

You'll say the courier now can boast
A steed as good as e'er was lost;
For, when the summit's height is crost,
He rode him not an hour—
And well you'll guess that those rude days
Brooked not our languid, cold delays,
For, glittering in the morning rays,
As he turns tow'rds the tower, he sees
Of spears and helms a sparkling crowd,
That is hidden soon in a rising cloud,
Which swells, as if of its convoy proud!
Asks he whose spears are these?
'Tis the foremost of Philibert's gallant band,
That for ever armed and ready stand,
Their preparations few and brief
To aid their king or serve their chief.
Scarce was the royal mandate known,
When this bold advance was up and gone;

While the tocsin from the belfry * calls
The startled serfs to the castle walls.
In courts without and halls within
All is confusion now and din;
And nought but clamour, rout, and noise
This bustling, boisterous day employs.
Quick to and fro the vassals fly,
And all their various callings ply;
The archer bold, his tough bow stringing;
The harnessed squire to saddle springing;
Casque, shield, and clattering armour ringing.

Soon are the stable's spacious stalls
Left empty and forlorn;—
Soon from the castle's rifled halls
Are its glittering trophies torn—

* The tocsin, which was hung in the belfry of the ancient *châteaux*, appears to have been rung out only on emergencies which required the immediate assemblage of the serfs; as, invasion of the fief, or an occasion such as is supposed in the poem. The *cloche d'alarme*, it would seem, served for every less important summons; and these, with the *Guaite* for an account of whose limited duties see a Note to Canto sixth, were the means employed for the prompt announcement of all extraordinary and sudden events.

Where sword and lance returned the glance
Which the morn through the lattice flung;
And bright shields beaming, and banners streaming,
In martial tapestry hung;
Walls, blank and bare, now meet the glare
That the noontide Sun casts o'er them;
And the wind's hoarse sound, as it sweeps around
Might be thought, from its tone, to deplore them.

Unheeding rush the warlike swarms
With one loud cry "to arms, to arms!"
And 'midst the throng, 'bove all alert,
Incessant seen is Philibert;
In stable, armoury and hall,
Instructing each, inspiring all;
With ardent haste despatching forth
Those readiest armed the first to join;
Reserving but a few of worth
To wait with him the coming dawn.

These the choice band who proudly share
The task, the Banneret's pennon square,
The standard of their lord to bear;
Each one, whose well-distinguished name
On honor's scroll such place might claim,
As erst was stamped, with fiery glow,
By Charny bold, or Boucicaut,*
Whose daring held such high emprize
As dizzied valour's wondering eyes.
And soon these faithful few remain
Alone, of all the numerous train,
Whose warlike clangour lately rung
The loudly-answering courts among.
No more is seen the busy throng;
No longer heard the jocund song;
No maidens now, with lively sport,
In graceful groups adorn the court;

* For an account of their exploits see Note IV to this Canto

But singly sorrowing now they move,
Swayed by the varying breath of love,
As the banderole * floats on the castle tower,
What way the wind may fill the hour.
Some in their chambers, sad and lone,
Vain torrents weep for lovers gone;
From the turrets some, with strained looks cast,
The one dear form would fain descry,
'Midst the parting troop, now fading fast
Even from affection's eagle eye.

* The vanes placed on the *château* towers were differently shaped, in form of *banderoles* or pennons, according to the rank of the Seigneur. I am not quite certain of that to which the Banneret was entitled, but rather think that it bore the form of his "*pennon carré*" and that the *banderole* appertained to the Chevaliers bachelors. The right of placing these useful ornaments, was originally a mark of proud distinction; being granted to those warriors only who had been the first to mount to an assault, and who had planted their banner on the ramparts of an enemy. Thus the vane took the form of his standard, whose valour had gained him the privilege of using it.

See *la Gaule poétique*, t. 4, p. 295.

The faithful dogs unquiet go,
And sadly seem the truth to know;
The hungry bird, in fluttering rage,
Screams shrill, and flaps the' unconscious cage;
The few left steeds, with stamping hoof,
Neigh fierce through each deserted stall;
While louder echoings from the roof
Prolong the harsh yet mournful call.
The last slow straggler quits the walls;
The bridge in sullen grating falls;
The porter bars the massive gate,
And all is still and desolate!

So quick this wond'rous change was wrought,
It gave no breathing time to thought—
So new—so wild—'twould almost seem
The shifting scenery of a dream;
Or as if some strange, wizard hand
Had touched with all-destructive wand,
And turned, at once, elysian bliss
To a bleak solitude like this.

'Tis evening now—and night apace,
In envious speed comes striding on;
As though her hurrying steps would chace
The last sad shade of pleasures gone—
Night of intense and sudden woe,
That comes a deadlier gloom to throw,
Than when Pompeii's buried bower
In one black ruin happier fell,
For mercy winged the sable shower
And none survived their pangs to tell,
Nor wretch from torpid trance awoke,
To loathe the light as morning broke!—
But here stands one fixed, ruined form,
A shattered record of the storm;
Her livid lip no warm sigh feels;
Down her pale cheek no big tear steals;
She utters no complaining sound,
Nor casts her glazed eyes around;

But stands as motionless and chill
As the fair, pellucid icicle
That hangs on the fall of a frozen rill.

Alas! and can no fairy wing
Fan with mild breeze th' expiring breath—
Can nothing wake the heart's dull string,
Struck by the tuneless touch of death!
Does that cold breast no longer owe
The sound of his inspiring tone,
Which wakened soft vibrations once,
As lyre from lyre draws sweet response?
And breathes indeed even one short word
From his loved voice, by her unheard—
Is then indeed its influence o'er?—
Alas! it speaks for her no more.

She feels no pang—she knows no care,
But stands a breathing statue there.
Joy—sorrow—hope—despair—delight—
Sense—feeling—thought—in one wild flight

All gone with him—and she, bereft
Of her life's life, still living left!

Long thus she stands, nor all the cares
That fond attention's hand prepares;
Nor all Count Walderne's piercing woe;
Nor the tears from her faithful maids that flow;
Nor the morning's cool, reviving breath
Can snatch her from this transient death,
Till, starting from its little couch,
Her infant daughter called aloud—
O holy Nature! at thy touch
Rushed to her brain the living flood—
With starting eye, and visage wild,
In frantic, ghastly joy, she smiled—
And shrieking loud "my child, my child!"
Stretched wide her arms the babe to clasp—
Shrinking it shunned the' unusual grasp;
While the cold, senseless Isabelle
Exhausted, by her infant fell.

And Philibert is gone! and now
For words of flame his soul to shew—
In wild, perturbed anguish lost—
Betwixt conflicting frenzies tossed—
His maddened mind—his heart's hot grief,
  Plunging in thought's deep gulph in vain,
Whose boiling crater, fierce and brief,
  Flings forth the ruined wreck again.

Philosophy, in hours like this,
May proudly vaunt its frigid bliss;
But 'tis a cheat, whose boast deceives
That log alone—who *thinks* he grieves.
He who, when torn from life's best charms,
From love's embrace, or friendship's arms,
Can reason with the tears that flow,
Or argue out the fire's wild glow—
On his hard heart, with iron hand
Let fate his idol's image brand!—

Not such was Philibert—for him
Lifes cup, embittered to the brim,
Stood drugged with sorrows—yet one throb
Beat through his soul's convulsive sob,
With strong pulsation filled each vein,
And struggling swelled the flood of pain.
A tyrant thrill, whose reign began
Coeval with the birth of Man;
The deified, triumphant pest
That rules, and ravages his breast—
'Twas Glory! mighty, mystic name;
That phantom meteor of the mind,
Which flashing wide its glance of flame,
Illumes the waste of woe behind;
And parched beneath the scorching glow
A crimson desert glares below!

In Philibert the latent fire
Long slumbering lay—a dark desire,

That now in desperate wildness woke,
And even love's fetters, bounding, broke.
To horse he flew—nor paused until
He gained the top of that high hill,
From which his last stretched look may fall
On the Towers that hold his earthly all:
But still the lingering mists of night
Obstruct his anxious, aching sight,
Which vainly turns, with baffled gaze,
On a thick veil of dusk and haze;
Till, long entranced upon the spot,
His wearied mind the scene forgot;
To other days, long since gone by,
Reverting turned his memory;
Deeply revolving all the past,
Thought rushed on thought, with force so vast,
That soon on his bewildered brain
Their faint impressions fell in vain.

Thus waves, upon the flowing tide,
Foaming rush on in rapid pride;
With bellowing roar invade the strand,
And threaten to o'erwhelm the land:—
But, when the shore at length they reach,
Fall powerless on the sea-worn beach.

And long in this distracted mood,
In solitary gloom he stood—
Starting at length, as if some thought,
With more than common anguish fraught,
Had roused his soul's dark reverie,
He gazed, in cold surprize, to see
Beam high in heaven the sun's bright glow,
While thin mists, from the vale below,
Slow up the vine-clad mountains borne,
Are mixed with early clouds of morn;
And, gradual to the tops ascending,
In light and vapoury union blending.

And, distant, on the ambient skies,
The grey tower meets his wandering eyes;—
Electric through his shuddering frame,
Like the snake's quick-shot sting it came—
Sudden he turns, with stifled breath—
He must not gaze—to look is death—
Another glance on that cold wall,
And lost are pride—fame—glory—all!—
He wheels abrupt—his courser's sides
Mark well with what fierce haste he rides.
Well may the war-horse foam and bleed,
Swell his red nostrils—glare his eyes—
No common race demands his speed—
'Tis from *himself* the *rider* flies!

No instant's farther stop he makes,
But soon the sauntering troop o'ertakes:
Onward in silent haste they move;
Some muse on battle,—more on love,—

And some, in cold indifference gay,
Go as their chieftain leads the way.
Onward they go—nor slacken rein,
Till, entering on a spacious plain,
He marks a numerous mounted train,
Whose welcome greetings quickly tell
Them friends, who know and love him well.

Foremost was Augustin St. Clair,
His nearest kinsman, and the heir
Of Valombar, by fixed entail,
If sons from Philibert should fail.
A soldier he, of scanty store,
That neither wished nor hoped for more.
Unpolished—honest—blunt and rough;
His cares but few—his means enough—
He loved his kinsman, but forgot
The heirdom which he wanted not.

Elder than Philibert, he bore
Claim to regard of mingled tone—
Than father less, than brother more,—
Yet both seemed woven into one;
Thus Philibert's affection wore
Respect and love in unison;
While Isabelle, since thought began,
Hailed him the type of worth in man.
High in the King's esteem he stood,
Who knew him generous, brave, and good;
Doomed in a place of public trust,
To let his sword inactive rust,
Much was he grieved—for warlike strife
To him was honor, wealth and life—
But that 'twould slight his sovereign's grace,
He'd quick resign th' inglorious place,
And willingly, to join the war
Would yield all chance of Valombar.

Short time the friends together stay;
No season that for form's delay—

"St. Clair," cried Philibert, "I go
"To meet our faith's inveterate foe;
"Haply I've ta'en my last farewell
"Of my loved sire—my Isabelle—
"My only child"—his faltering tongue
Will not the mournful theme prolong.
His kinsman's offered hand he takes—
Another struggling effort makes—
"While they my distant loss deplore;—
"Or should I fall"—"No more—no more!
"Nor thou nor I unmanned must be—
"Disgraceful this to both—
"On my good sword I swear to thee,
"And pledge my knighthood's troth—
"While I am blessed with strenght and life,
"And till my course is run,
"I'll stand a brother to thy wife—

" Should thy brave heart in battle bleed,
" Thy daughter shall no father need,—
" Nor thy old Sire, a son!"—

One fast embrace between the friends
The short but trying conference ends;
A little more—and o'er the green
Nor man nor steed is longer seen.

END OF CANTO SECOND.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO THIRD.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO THIRD.

On alpine heights, whose bold tops rise
In rude defiance to the skies;
Where Jura bares its craggy front,
And proudly braves the tempest's brunt,
From whence before the ravished glance,
Wide stretched below, lies blooming France—
Far gazing on his native land,
A mail-clad warrior takes his stand.—

—O France! to all this wondering earth
The pride of great creation's plan—
Choice, chosen spot, whose soil gives birth
To every good that grows for man—
Whose breathing airs appear to warm
Fresh into life each social charm;
How e'er, in thy ambrosial sky,
Could mercy's blossoms withering die;
How ever could thy placid clime
Ripen the scattered seeds of crime;
How could thy sons behold thy heaven,
And see all nature smile around,
Yet, by demoniac fury driven,
With blood-stains dye her holiest ground!
But hold—nor thus reverting cast
The shuddering thought in horror back,
On scenes where terror's whirlwind blast
Left one wild ruin in its track—

Still farther let the refluent mind,
With unclosed eye, to times remote
Fly swift, on pinions of the wind—
Ere the red scourge mad millions smote,
Or the fiery flood of wrath was spilt,
In vengeance on a nation's guilt!—

The rugged breeze, the stranger meeting,
Flings harsh and rough its wholesome greeting;
Blowing aloft the mantle's fold,
Sports round his form in circles cold,
Fantastic flaps his jet-black plume,
And paints his cheeks with mountain bloom.
Placed heedless on the rising ledge
That marked a yawning gulph's steep edge—
His trembling steed would frequent throw
Wild glances on the chasm below;
But when the bounding Ibex sprung
Careless the hideous crags among;

And the browsing Chamois' sentried herd
Crested the verge, and nothing feared,
The charger o'er the distant plain
In freshened courage gazed again.
Slow pacing up the hill's rude side
The warrior's weary comrades ride,
As whitening showers of mountain spray
Dash lightly o'er their slippery way.
A moment lost dark cliffs between—
Then issuing from the close ravine—
Now buried low in dark recesses,
Which no fond gleam of sunshine blesses;

* The Ibex, or goat of the rocks, is an animal peculiar to the Alps. It resembles the common goat, but its horns are very long and thick, and of such strength as to save it in headlong descents from precipices. The ibex will mount a perpendicular rock, bounding like an elastic body struck against a hard substance. The Chamois is commonly seen in herds of twenty or thirty, browsing on the highest summits, with a centinel who alarms them by a shrill cry.

Again, emerging from the deep,
Cautious they tread the dangerous steep,
As the warm sun's invigorate ray
Hails their return to alpine day;
And, glancing from each polished casque,
In the bright beam gay insects bask.
And sometimes on the granite block,
Beneath a huge impending rock,
Pause for their drooping steeds they make—
While some their thirst imperfect slake
In the oozing stream, whose tricklings flow
To wear the sterile font below.
At length, the path's high summit reached,
Their stiffened limbs at ease are stretched
Careless upon the welcome ground—
While the blown horses lie around,
Or of the coarse and scanty grass
Rob the wild tenants of the pass.

Braced by a short hour's freshening rest,
Thus Philibert his troop addressed.

"Now then, my friends and vassals true,
"To our loved land we bid adieu.
"By fate for brilliant acts designed,
"Honor before us—Love behind—
"The one in haughty beckoning leads,
"The other points to glorious deeds—
"We cannot err—we must not fail—
"Honor and love together tied,
"More strong than helmet, shield, or mail,
"Shall be our guardian and our guide!"

Up spring the band with vigour new,
And through the pass their route pursue:
Eastward they go—in fancy see
The tented fields of Hungary—
But winding down the sharp descent
Their latest thoughts on home are bent;

And, as their last regrets they turn,
Thus their sad song is backward borne.

Soldiers' Song.

Dear native soil of France, adieu!
Far, far away,
Wheree'r we stray,
Thou shalt be present to our view.
Like northern birds, whose frozen home
Sends them for happier climes to roam,
Each breeze that blows shall swell our pain
Till that which wafts us back again—
But ah! our fate in sadness mocks
The sorrows of these exile flocks,
For round the world we see,
In all its charms, its bloom, its flowers,
Together joined, no home like ours
No other land like thee!

How loud the dinging cymbal clanks
While the clarion's voice of brass is sounding;
And the rattling drum,
With deafening hum,
Calls, on proud Danube's trembling banks,
The' Hungarian host to quick-formed ranks,
In valour's fire from earth rebounding.
The river grandly rolls along
As if the fierce array it braves—
And dares the bold collected throng
To ruffle its majestic waves.
Weak barrier it, in all its pride,
To guard Bulgaria's threatned side;
Vainly the blustering bulwark flows
Or dares pronounce the impious ban,
When christian champions seek their foes
And sons of France are in the van.

Hark! to the wild, tumultuous shout,
From hundred thousand throats sent out,
With stunning crash, and thundering roar,
When, darting from the crowded shore,
The leading boat its eager prow
Plunged in the stream—and on the bow
In youth's first blaze of warlike bloom,
Fearless De Nevers waved his plume.

What Heroes next, intrepid there
Hurled their bright helmets high in air?
What rushing crowd of thrilling names
That history yet unfading saves,
Guarding with giant arm their graves,
The world's loud praise, illustrious claims?
Not all the thousand Knights that stood,
Of France's noblest names the flower,
And stemmed broad Danube's angry flood,
First of the brave in that proud hour,

Marche, Eu, de Coucy, Vienne, de Bar—
Not all those thousand sons of war,
Were higher famed than one, unknown—
Save by his fiery deeds alone.

Pierre de Rouvergne this self-raised name
That carved its rugged road to fame.
Thick-shading mystery darkly hung
To screen the *soil from whence he sprung*;
While rumour, with intricate fold,
Belied the tales itself had told;
And many a futile effort ran
Its tangled wanderings to scan.
Whether of noble birth or base
The curious world could never trace;
And only knew in doubtless truth,
That once a lone and stranger youth,
Of haughty mien and eye of pride,
Which every searching glance defied,
Had offered to a gallant lord
To be the bearer of his sword,

What time bold Clisson took the field
War against Bretagne's Duke to wield.

In this unsparing conflict trained
The youth his blood-stained laurels gained;
His merit form's cold march defied,—
Ardent it met rank's coming stride,
And gave nobility new pride.
And once, when mounting fast to fame,
Pressed to reveal his birth and name,
With fierce disdain he answered stern
"My name is known—Pierre de Rouvergne.
"As for my birth—its proof is laid
"On the sharp record of my blade—
"Let those who doubt—" but, turning quick,
His rising ire he seemed to check,
And his proud front, unused to blush,
Was tinged with momentary flush.

From thence no galling question asked
The hidden truth so closely masked,

And Pierre was left, alone to lie
In mantling folds of mystery.
But not obscurely dark he lay—
His courage forced the' obstructed way;
And other bright allurements too
On his choaked path their lustre threw.
A towering form, and noble face
Cast in the mould of manly grace,
Prepared the wondering crowd to hail
The hero of some fabled tale:
In him the goodliest virtues beamed
(As far as semblance claimed belief)
And every bland attraction seemed
To wait the beckon of the chief.
His skilful pencil well could trace
The mimic charms of beauty's face;
And with sweet tones, and matchless skill,
His voice the list'ner led at will;
While rhymes of pure provençal art
Gave warmth to strains that touched the heart.

Yet still, beneath this brilliant host
Of gifts by virtue cherished most,
Close penetration sometimes saw
To vulgar eyes a viewless flaw,
A hurried — envious flash, half hid
Beneath his dark-fringed, lowering lid,
When candour's voice was heard to raise
Th' applauding shout to others' praise. —
And once or twice, when rival friends
On glory's field extended lay,
As o'er the bleeding corse he bends,
And scanty tears would force their way;
The keen observer feigned to mark
From his full eye an ardent spark,
Mixed with a pleased, yet fiend-like smile
That seemed to curl his lip the while.

When wearied war, in forced repose
Scowled on the brave, relenting foes,

And o'er each hostile hero's soul
Mild mercy's healing influence stole;
Joined firm in friendship's long-closed arms,*
The touching scene each rude breast warms—
The softened soldiers fling away
The weapons of a deadlier day;
And each rough hand returns the grasp
Of reconcilement's cordial clasp
Save his—who sullen stands and grim,
Peace brings no joy to solace him;
And the blest union draws from Pierre
Nought but a chill, contemptuous sneer.

Retirement's lowly blessings spurned,
Where has the proud marauder turned?
His fertile mind no succour needs—
He wills—designs—attempts—succeeds,
And springs at once to fame secure,
An all-accomplished Troubadour.

* See Note III to this Canto.

With lightsome step and courtly air,
In pleasures flowery meads to move;
Slave to a smile—light chains to wear,
Enthusiast Champion of the fair
And wandering Votary of love.
Sweetly singing—softly sighing—
Restless, amorous and roving—
Soothly swearing—gently dying
And ever—ever deeply loving!
With well-affected lively mien
The gay Pilgrim constant seen;
Where'er he goes with melting strains
A welcome entrance quick he gains,
Yet scarce his parting steps he turns
When some sad fair his falsehood mourns
Bright-spangled wreaths of silvery flowers
Each fond admirer freely showers,
And many a brilliant plume has crowned
The brow that hardier scenes had browned.

The amorous conqueror frequent sips
His sweet reward from beauty's lips;
And oft 'twas whispered that his bliss
Was formed of favours more than this:
But all remark the wary cares
With which unhallowed joys he shares:
Though often *threatening* to expire,
He still lives through Love's blazing fire;
Unlike the madly fond Rudel,
Who in hot raptures lifeless fell;
Or Cabestan, in heedless hour
Victim to savage Raymond's power.
His wily pleasures thus pursuing,
Best pleased when others' joys undoing,
Wandering he went, in secret stung,
With flinty heart, and serpent tongue.

But war, unpitying war, once more
Rouses the land with lion roar,

And shakes again, in furious start,
Each nerve of Pierre's congenial heart.
The Christian columned power he joins,
While clamorous welcome shakes the lines;
Decked in the trappings of his toils,
He sports his pomp and spreads his spoils;
The mingled red and purple hue
In his rich livery gave to view
Presumptuous to th' assembled throng
His proud device, "In all things strong:" *
While none of the luxuriant train
Shewed costlier proofs of solid gain;
Nor on dark Danube's surface played
A gaudier armour's glittering shade.

And now on Turkey's hostile side
Stands the fierce host in martial pride,

* Red and purple, in ancient heraldry, signified, "*fort en toutes choses.*"

Hist. de la Chevalerie française.

While nothing meets their ardent eyes
But far-spread fields, and wild surprize.
" Where, boasting Bajazet! where now,
" In bloated power so late arrayed,
" Has thy blanched cheek and quivering brow
" Shrunk in the close seraglio's shade,
" From the keen vengeance of our blade?"
Thus spoke the Christians' high disdain;
But Sigismond repelled the strain:
He knew that though the Lion crouched,
Yet, when the darting spring was touched,
He rarely sprung in vain!

The lines are marked — the Camp is traced —
The white tents gaily spot the green,
Like sea birds on the ocean's breast,
From distant cliffs obscurely seen.
The bristling pallisadoes shew
Defiance to th' expected foe,

And christian banners broad unfurled
Flout far the unbelieving world.
Not long the warriors idly lie,
Nor stainless let their white flags fly;
But widely scour the fated shore
Bathing their iron gloves in gore:
While ever first where dangers led,
And always deepest stained with red
Was dauntless Pierre, to bear away
The bloody honors of the fray.

One eve, when high with conquest swelled,
The warrior chiefs sage council held,
Oe'r maps and plans deep-pondering bent
Cautious within De Nevers' tent,
A cry of superstitious fear
Broke sudden on the watchful ear;
And bursting in, in wild dismay,
A Captain forced his shuddering way.

" Woe! woe, great chiefs," the trembler cried,
" To Christian hopes, and Europe's pride!
" Fly the foul land that magic blinds,
" Where demons walk the viewless winds—
" You doubt—go forth—and see, yourselves
" With eyes convinced, the wizard elves,
" Where striding up from Danube's banks,
" Marshalled as earth-born champions' ranks,
" The troop comes on—and he, bold Pierre,
" Who stands a living mortal here,
" By hellish glamour changed and screened,
" Stalks at their head—a fleshless fiend! "
With breathless and impetuous gush,
Bold—yet half-shuddering, forth they rush—
And, marvel strange, pale—scared—aghast,—
With faltering step, Rouvergne comes last!
Scarce in the air, when back they spring—
Blasted by no dread spectral thing—
But stunned with quick and speechless start,
That doubting shook the firmest heart,

To see, in noblest mortal guise,
A brilliant warrior meet their eyes,
So strangely like their brother chief
That sense could scarcely yield belief.
He speaks—good Heavens! what spell has strung
In tones like these another tongue?
'Tis Pierre himself!—each quick eye glances
Where he—the real Pierre advances—
But short he stops—in nerveless fear
Wide gaping with astounded stare,
To mark his form return'd as clear
As if a mirror hung in air:—
Nor did Narcissus wilder look
In amorous wonder on the brook,
Than the bold stranger chieftain now,
Astonished Philibert! whose brow
Seems to fling back Pierre's frozen gaze
In looks of petrified amaze.
Miraculous resemblance! whence
Comes this wild mockery of sense?
Has angry Heaven's omnipotence

This puny wonder deigned to plan
Scorning the impotence of man,
And baffling mortal wisdom's sight,
That dares to pierce with impious flight
The hidden Deity's broad flood of light!

When the first murmur of surprize
Subsiding gave the mind new play,
Then rose aloft the joyous cries,
That waked the echo of the skies,
And roused anew the slumbering day:
And leader of the loudest roar
Was he who trembled most before—
"Joy, joy," he cries, "brave comrades cheer—
"Now shake, Nicopolis! * with fear—
"Great Valombar, another Pierre,
"The hero of the jet-black plume,
"Has joined at length his conquering arm
"To add fresh vigour to the charm
"That hurries on thy doom!"

* At that time besieged by the christian army.

When Philibert's first cares had placed
His hardy followers safe at rest,
And sleep diffused its soothing breath
In harmless mimicry of death,
Next his fond thoughts are turned to cheer
Those hearts from distance doubly dear—
Little he writes—for soon as day
A home-bound courier speeds away,
But every soul-felt word enlightens
The Love that absence only brightens.
He tells of that resemblance strange
Which shed amazement wide around—
That his full bosom felt a change
New to its former wildest range,
Which caused his heart as high to bound
As if a brother's breast it found.

'Twas said that when the letter reached
The lonely halls of Valombar,
And found their pensive mistress stretched
Upon the sorrowing couch of care;

That she in grateful rapture poured
Thanks for the safety of her lord,
Unmarked the rest—but that surprize
Wild flashed from old Count Walderne's eyes,
In speechless thought transfixed as keen
As those who viewed the marvellous scene.—

And how flowed Pierre's full tide of thought
Flung on the bed where sleep came not?
Did warm and generous impulse fill
His ruthless breast?—No—dark and chill
His feelings ran—and first came hate
Quick—bloody—fierce—inveterate.—
For the first time degrading shame
Stained with foul blot his fearless fame—
For the first time his haughty head
Had cowered in superstitious dread—
Before a shade!—"Infernal thought!
"When the damned mischief sleeps forgot

"Swallow me Earth—and thou, dark sprite,
"Thou'rt come to cross my blasted sight!—
"Perhaps to shake my just renown,
"And snatch the chaplet from my crown—
"Beware thee, Philibert, beware!
"Thou hast a dreadful gulph to dare—
"Before thee yawns a cavern dark—
"Distant the time perhaps—but mark—
"If our minds as our forms resemble,
"At their dread crash might heroes tremble."

The livelong night, the sentry told,
Did Pierre low-muttering converse hold
With his tent's void.—But morning's dawn
Saw him step forth with tranquil smile;
As if some angel's hand had drawn
From his smooth brow all trace of guile:

Yet still this borrowed calm to mock
A casual frown o'er his forehead strays,
Like the rippling wave on a coral rock,
Whose surge the hidden reef betrays,
In the mildest hours of the smoothest days.*
Early to Philibert he hies,
Who hails him with delighted eyes;
Short time it needs, with souls like his,
Believing that what should be is,
To sink the dupe of artifice.
His ardent unsuspecting heart
Quick opens to the villain's art,
And soon within its inmost core
Sprung feelings never known before—

* In the "*voyage de Dentrecasteaux*" (who sailed in 1792 on a fruitless search after *la Pérouse*) it is stated that the whole extent of the island of pines, on the southern extremity of new Caledonia, is bound by an uninterrupted chain of coral rock; whose edge, rising to the surface of the sea, shews even in the calmest weather, a silvery, rippling line, far as the eye can reach.

And oft' 'as burst the' unbidden sigh,
In gazing round the marshalled host,
To think, in all that met his eye
Were none of those he valued most
When under Afric's scorching sun—
Now widely scattered—withered—gone—
He felt that all was well repaid
In Pierre, whom nature seemed to form
Embodying buried friendship's shade,
And yielding life another charm.

No common vows the contract twined
That bound them firm for life or death;
By oaths and solemn rites refined
And blessed with honor's hallowed breath;
Brothers in arms, together joined,
'Gainst all the hostile world combined—
In the hot scenes that soon came round
Ever inseparate were they found:

The plume of Philibert waved dark,
And served the twin-like friends to mark,
For Pierre was always known in fight
By his, of pure and dazzling white.

Both dared so much and fought so well,
That fame's bright wreath divided fell,
Scattering its blossoms on the path
Traced by the champions' warlike wrath.
In the few hours by duty spared
The camp's rude joys they mutual shared;
Oft', on the green sward reckless flung,
Their own light lays by turns they sung,
Or the cool evening whiled away
In talking o'er the arduous day.

One morn by summer heat oppressed,
As Philibert's unfastened vest
Betrayed the treasure of his breast—
The portrait of his life's best part
That hung suspended o'er his heart—

Pierre on the picture seemed to throw
A piercing look, whose fevered glow
A lover's fervour might betray,
For some dear object far away.
What impulse, of a moment's birth,
Has drawn this fiery ardour forth,
And fixed the villain's gloating eye
Upon the senseless ivory?
Love! If love's angel name be given
To the hot fury of the breast
That fears no hell—and hopes no heaven
But that which tires its lusts to rest.
And is this love? and does there live
Bold blasphemy, that dares to name
The furnace heat its firebrands give,
And seraph love's soft warmth the same!
Know ye the difference, mark it well,
'Twixt virtue's throb and passion's swell—
Pierre's was the red, volcanic blaze,
That vomits forth its lurid rays;

But Philibert's the flame that springs
Bright from Dauphiné's rocky clay,
A pure light o'er the rough earth flings,
But casts its grossness all away.*

What other furies worked within
Pierre's heart, that dismal den of sin?
A single glance had served to light
Fierce sparklings through its dreary night,
Like thousand flashes, by one torch
Drawn from the spar-formed cavern's arch.
When his bold eye that wild glance shot,
Burning, yet dark—a sudden thought
At once fixed firm the deadliest plot

* The burning spring which is reckoned one of the wonders of Dauphiné, is a spot of ground about two yards in length, and one in breadth, on which there appears a small wandering flame. This spot lies on a steep rock of rotten slate; but the flame does not seem to proceed from any fissure, nor can one perceive any matter proper to feed it, or any ashes produced. There is a kind of white and very sharp saltpetre to be found at some distance from the flame, which probably is fed by something of that nature; but it is remarkable, that this flame burns much brisker in winter than in summer, disappearing gradually as the heat increases, till it sometimes goes quite out, and afterwards kindles again of itself. It may easily be lighted by any other fire, and when this is done it is attended with some noise.

That ever fiend, with hellish art,
Breathed on a tempted villain's heart.—
"Death—death to Philibert, and then
"Speed quick as wind to far Guienne—
"It needs not sorcery's subtle aid,
"When once in Valombar displayed
"Thy form, like Philibert's self is seen—
"What power can mar thy fortune then?
"Doubt not that fate, in generous mood,
"Planned this strange likeness for thy good;
"Wealth—influence—title—honors all—
"The—portrait's fair original!"—
Thus formed his demon mind the spell,
Worked up of lust, revenge, and hell.

Recovering quick his wonted mien
He threw one look—deep-searching, keen,
To probe his destined victim's breast—
But turned composed, secure, at rest,
For there his prying glance could trace
Suspicion found no resting place.

With master-villainy he drew
The threads that formed his complex clew;
Deep treasured every word that fell
Of Valombar and Isabelle,
Inveigling, with each marked reply,
True love's untired garrulity:
Led on his dupe with deepest art
To talk of those who filled his heart;
Traced all those little facts, that lie
Loose scattered on the memory—
The gentle secrets that betray
The scenes of youthful love's mild day,
From artless Philibert he wormed;
Who marvelled, in his honest mind,
That nature's hand had truly formed
One so devoted and so kind,
As such a deep regard to take
In tales like these for friendship's sake.

Twice did the all-consummate wretch
Night's black alliance anxious snatch,
While his brave comrades sleeping lie
In honor's bold security,
Softly from Philibert's bare breast
To steal his amulet of rest;
And with firm hand and nicest care
(Albeit his heart beat high the while)
He traced exact the semblance fair,
That calmly met his heated stare
And damned him with its angel smile.

Finished the task, his glutton eyes
Feast long upon the hard-earned prize,
While thus the miscreant boaster cries—
"Herald of bliss, at last thou'rt mine—
"Lights of bold daring now shoot out;
"Down through each dark obstruction shine,
"And Earth nor Heaven shall bar my route!"

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And now the bloodiest day comes on
That ever shrunk from Heaven's hot frown;
And grumbling in the distance far
Strides forth the thunderbolt * of war.
Now glad Nicopolis, on high
Flings savage bursts of bellowing joy;
More high the infidels erect
The towering symbol of their sect,
And mad fanatics frantic toss
Threats of dark horror to the cross—
While, ranged beneath their crescent sign,
Fierce thousands stand in curved line,
For Bajazet its shape has given
To form the Turks' embattled power;
As if this scourge of man had driven
His impious daring 'gainst high heaven,
And mocked its wrath in that dread hour.

* Bajazet was sirnamed *Ilderim*, the thunderbolt.

And now, despite of caution sage,
The christian lines, in blindfold rage,
With rashly valourous fire advance—
What power of all the eastern world
Can stand the rattling tempest, hurled
From fate's fierce shafts, the troops of France!
Down sinks the Turk—whole ranks o'ereast,
Like flowers before the hot wind's blast,
While shivered scimitars betray
The falchioned victors' glittering way,
And draggled turbans shew the gash,
As rocks wide-riven by lightning's flash.

Down, down they go! they break—they fly—
Now Sigismond—now Hungary,
On till your strong nerves crack!
With giant stride rush on, rush on
Thousands—Oh shame! not one—not one
The' heroic band to back—

Oh! coward King—Oh! recreant host
Look, look upon your victims lost,
Gaze on their valour's track—
Lost in your cause—while back they turn
The' imploring glance—the claim you spurn
And wheel your ranks away!
Oh! be this foul disgrace forgot—
Why has oblivion failed to blot
The records of this day?
But no—until one red shower drains
All bleeding Hungary's bursting veins,
And spouting torrents flood her plains
Nought can wash out this stain of stains!

Backward no more the Turk is borne,
For the deep ambush opens wide,
And France's heroes, lone and lorn,
Are swept before the rushing tide:
As mountain streams in summer shrink
Between their rough and rugged banks,
So the parched, faltering columns sink
Beneath the foe's fast closing flanks;

While with wild yells, the infidels,
In bigot fury madly burning,
Spring, roar and bound, with hideous sound,
Like tigers on their hunters turning.

As two tall vessels, side by side,
The same in bold, majestic form,
Deep plunging through the foaming tide,
With streamers floating to the storm,
Do Philibert and Pierre move on
Distinguished by their plumes alone.
Like the famed Lapithæ,* who stood
A rampart 'gainst Troy's rushing flood,
The sturdy bulwarks of the pass
Stemming the battle's moving mass—
Unhorsed—the dauntless chiefs on foot
Firm in the sanguined soil take root;
Walled in by Death's intrenching mound,
While crackling armour scatters round
An iron surface on the ground,

* Polypætes and Leonteus.—See the Iliad. M. v. 181 to 194.

Close on their chieftain to the war,
Dash the brave sons of Valombar—
The bellowing deluge to arrest,
Each panting shews his bucklered breast;
But vain th' exhausted ranks oppose
The turbaned torrent of their foes,—
In dire succession drop the brave,
Choaking the chasm of glory's grave;
But their bold eyes, in death upturned,
Shoot glances still, sublimely fierce,
The dying flame of hearts that burned
Like earth-fires on their clay-cold hearse.

And even great Pierre, at length o'erthrown,
With many a wound sinks fainting down;
But Philibert, against the crowd,
That bursts like some dark thunder-cloud,
Stands o'er his fallen friend alone,
And shields his body with his own.
The Turks press on—the hero hem—
What matters it! he frowns on them—

Each sigh that from his comrade came
Sweeps like a whirlwind through his frame,
And grief and rage alternate aid
The terrors of his blushing blade.

At length reviving Pierre again
Springs like a lion from his den—
As when rude blasts, in spiral drift,
From earth the dusty column lift,
The awe-struck peasant deems the cloud
Some dire enchanter's curst abode;
So Pierre upon his dastard foes
In sudden might like magic rose.
His blood-drenched plume, wide streaming o'er
His visage pale, deep stained with gore,—
His eyes a wild and meteor glare
Fierce darting through his raven hair—
All spoke a horror, something more
Than mortal aspect ever wore—
He rushes terrible—the foe
Shrink shuddering from the coming blow—

But not to hurl on them the harm
The monster heaves his new-nerved arm;
Full upon Philibert he bounds—
Breathless from wonder—weak from wounds—
" At length the destined hour is come!
" Now Philibert receive thy doom—
" Die hated wretch! " and at the word
Quick speeds the almost blunted sword,
Deep through the corselet's feeble guard—
Down totters Philibert to earth, and then
The villain strikes again—again—
Self—safety—danger—death forgot,
Revenge deep-swallowing every thought,
To crush his bleeding prey he flings
All his vast bulk—while thunderings
Of joy burst from the foe, who springs
In one wild heap's tumultuous crush,
And round the prostrate bodies rush.

Here drops uncertainty's dark veil
Upon the tenor of the tale.

A straggling few, by happy chance
Too late for fight, escaped to France;
These dire details in terror bore,
And finished here—their task was, o'er—
"All who fought fell"—they knew no more
But that, as flying from the height
From whence their dimmed and dizzy sight
Had gazed on the disastrous fight,
After the hum of battle ended,
The clank of chains was harshly blended
With dying groans—and in the dingle
Wild shrieks at intervals would mingle,
As if the cold-blood, butchering Turk
At leisure closed his cruel work.

But here description's feeble pen
Yields hopeless the too arduous strain.—
Would you the clashing horrors know
When blade strikes blade, and foe meets foe,
Go list the bold and thrilling lay
That tells of Flodden's fatal day;

Hark to his self-surpassing tongue
Who the brave Ghebers' battle sung;
Or freeze the harrowed soul with dread
As in Corinth's "slippery streets" you tread—
And learn to feast on terrors grim,
Pictured with frightful force by him,
Proud master of the modern lyre,
Whose bold crash strains the quivering wire.

Yet well may trembling ages guess
That all combined were heavens of bliss,
To thy fell field Nicopolis!
When, screaming o'er their scented prey,
Thick-hovering Vultures hid the day,
And gaunt wolves howled their hungry way—
Where, on the redly reeking soil,
Flushed Murder panted from his toil;
And clotted Carnage, gorged with blood,
Crouched growling in the smoking flood!

END OF CANTO THIRD.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO FOURTH.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE setting sun still faintly beaming,
Around in dying splendour gleaming,
Retiring gently into night,
Spreads its broad stream of parting light,
And gilds, with even its latest ray,
The gloom that shrouds the closing day.
Thus Hope, abandoning the breast
Its mild yet glowing rays had blest,
Fairly retires—in mercy slow,
Nor plunges us at once in woe;
But softly stealing from the mind
Leaves for awhile its charm behind.

And long round Isabelle's lone heart
'Twined the firm spell's deceptive art;
Long did Hope's syren voice delude
The sadness of her solitude—
Still would her mind expectant spring,
Seduced by every flitting shade,
To each new promise wildly cling,
And strive to be again betrayed.
It will not be that Bard may name
Her anguish, when the tidings came,
That painted him, her best adored,
Gasping beneath a murderer's sword—
Grief has been chaunted; sorrow sung;
But faintly speaks the mightiest tongue,
If 'twould impart the sounds that first
From love's dissevered union burst,
When widowed matrons fill the air
With shrieks of uncontrouled despair;

Whether 'tis death that strikes the blow,
Which lays their rising raptures low,
Like hers who wept o'er Hector's urn—
Or when life's deadlier doom they mourn,
As Bertha from her Robert torn!

Six times had spring's returning voice
Waken'd afresh the torpid flowers;
Bade the blithe year again rejoice,
And wantoned through the sunny hours,
Since Isabelle, on that wild morn,
Forsaken, widowed and forlorn,
Bowed o'er the brink of life's decay,
In death-like trance unconscious lay.
For her the seasons, sad and slow,
Dragged on their ceaseless weight of woe,
And seemed, at each return, to bear
Fresh burthens for her load of care.
Fame, in camelion garment dressed,
Continual broke her scanty rest;

Shot forth a glimpse of fitful light,
To quench the gleam in gloomier night;
With changing colours decked each tale,
And, loudly lying, swelled the gale.
Long victim to its treacherous sport,
She listed every vague report;
Until at length, th' illusious light
Unheeded crossed her wearied sight,
And only seemed to leave behind
A strange vacuity of mind;
An apathy, as blank and lone,
As if sense slept upon its throne.

But even in these deadened hours
Nature and love would cross her way;
And life, with renovated powers,
Spring fresh to meet their gentle sway—
Her darling child's endearing grace
Threw transient calmness o'er her face;
Lulled for awhile her bosom's pain,
And lit her languid eye again.

And then a mild, imploring claim,
With bland persuasion soothly came,
Whose whispering voice, in feeble calls,
On Woman's ear ne'er vainly falls.—
If in wild nature's varying tones,
Or all the melodies of art,
There breathes a sound that virtue owns
To whose softest on the heart;
Whose sighs can best its cares assuage,—
'Tis the resistless plaint of age.
And could a heart like hers repose
In brooding gloom, on selfish woes,
When with calm voice, and gentle prayer,
Her more than father claimed her care?
Oh! no — with quickened step she hied,
By tenderest arts each want supplied;
For him the struggling sigh suppressed,
Whose inward utterance rent her breast;
With dreary gaiety essayed
To check the tear, that longed to flow;
But revelled, at night's favouring shade,
In depths of solitary woe!

Still does time's steady chisel trace
Deep furrows on the old man's face;
And, trickling down his hollowed cheeks,
The ready channels sorrow seeks—
Yet, brightning o'er the rugged lines,
A softened beam of comfort shines,
As, rich in charms, young Zoe grows,
More lovely from surrounding woes,
Like some sweet plant's prelusive leaf,
Fair promise of autumnal fruits,
That seems to spring from nature's grief,
When weeping dews refresh the shoots.
Cradled in sadness — nursed with sighs,
She was indeed the child of sorrow—
Yet did her early-speaking eyes
Bright sparks from native gladness borrow.
Struggling, as if to cast aside
The shades that strove their tints to hide

Hers was an infancy of thought—
An early spring, where winter threw
Its lingering clouds, whose darkness sought
To hide the young year's livelier hue:
And, from her childhood's sad employ,
She caught a sort of pensive joy,
That scarcely seemed one hour to stray
From her fond grandsire's couch away;
While Isabelle each moment snatched,
When the young guardian careful watched,
And hurried to the covert deep
To taste *her* bitter joy—and weep.

On the high bank, whose wooded side
Formed, sloping, that romantic dell
Which seemed the castles to divide,
Had the pure taste of Isabelle
A deep, sequestered shade designed;
A refuge for her anguished mind,

When in her first sad hours she mourned—
With still a cherished hope, that he
To whom each thought revolving turned,
Might grace her bower's maturity.
No effort of assiduous care
Did the expectant mourner spare,
And sweet adornments made the spot
The very Heaven of fancied thought.

Hid by the vine's impervious shade
The lily scented all the glade;
While purple clusters, bursting through,
In mellow luxury of hue,
Tempted the lovely spoiler's hand
To mar the Paradise it planned.
To aid the tulip's gaudy bloom
Each luscious floweret lent perfume;
And where the wanton jasmine creeping,
With lightly-branching woodbine twined,
A straggling rosebud sometimes peeping,
To all their sweets its fragrance joined,

And seemed to load the languid breeze,
That struggled faintly through the trees.
The light Acacia's drooping bough
In graceful motion felt the gale,
Which, rising from the dell below,
With sportive rustlings filled the vale;
While the showers that fell on the violet beds,
Were genial, warm and mild,
As the tear of love, which a mother sheds
On the brow of her sleeping child.

O what a bless'd retreat was this!
It was indeed a bower of bliss,
A spot for joys divine.—
Alas! that hard, relentless fate
Such sweets to grief should consecrate,
And make it sorrow's shrine—
Alas! that virtue's tears should stain
The flowers that decked so pure a fane,
And she, best formed for Love's delights,
Reign Priestess of its lonely rites!

One little spot there was, whose sod
Raised its green bosom o'er the rest,
Whose verdure no coarse footsteps trod,
Nor rude hand robbed its flower-strewn breast;
It was her mother's lowly grave—
There no dark cypress loved to wave,
Nor mournful willow seemed to be
Planted in death's proud pageantry;
Simple and silent was the tomb,
Unmarked by sights of gaudy gloom;
No beggar stone, nor boastful urn
Bade the cold stranger stop and mourn;
But scattered sweets around were strown,
Mild emblems of the spirit flown,
And 'twas a spot so wildly sooth,
That, from eternal realms of truth,
Soft guardian sylphs, of heavenly birth,
Might choose to range the sainted earth.

The humble mind that once gave breath
To the poor clay which slept beneath,

Had chosen to lay her modest head
In this remote, secluded bed,
More valued, and more dear to her
Than Earth's most gorgeous sepulchre;
For here, in Love's deluding day,
Had the winged moments flown away
With him, who lived to see her lie
In the cold grave's dark sanctuary;
But whom the forms of tyrant pride
To share her lowly lot denied,
In splendour's pomp a banquet sent
For reptiles of—a monument!

Here then the hapless daughter chose,
Her secret sorrows to repose;
And felt that o'er the holy ground
Soft inspirations floated round,
In dulcet tones, of earthless sound.
What though the parent soul takes flight,
Ere the babe basks in reason's light;

Though no mild traces feebly dwell
In faithless memory's silent cell,
And on the busy-working brain
Not even one shadowy tint remain—
Still, still, in hours of magic mood,
Close wrapped in mental solitude,
The venturous thought will dart on high
To meet the tenant of the sky;
Upraised towards ether wing its way.
And, lost in holy wanderings, stray
With the blest form it knows alone
A glory round her maker's throne;
Freed from all shade of groveling kind,
The mother and the angel joined!

Few worldly comforters were hers,
Borne raptured thus to heavenly spheres,
As, with pure thought, and knee low bent,
On aid immortal meek she leant.
Yet one there was in other days,
A light that now no longer shines—

St. Clair—who, though he could not raise
The cant that cold condolence whines,
Yet his blunt kindness did not less
Soothe both the wife's and sire's distress.
Those days were past—for, sad to tell,
No cheering solace now he threw
Around the grief-clad Isabelle;
But, false to oath and friend, withdrew
A slave in guilt's polluted cell.

Why does the tale require the muse
The foul apostate's course to track?
Rather the faultering hand would choose
To paint the robber on the rack;
Or, in dark lines of blood, record
The havoc of the murderer's sword,
Than sickening bend, to utter forth
The dismal fall of native worth.
Yet so it was—that once proud breast
Burned bright no more with honor's glow;

That heart no longer lay at rest,
Which knew not once remorseful throe,
But lightly throbbed, in happier hour,
Ere dark temptations tried its power.

St. Clair's was that elastic mind,
By nature formed of pliant kind;
Moulded for virtue, meant for good,
Which *little, selfish thoughts* withstood,
Long boldly beat in honor's swell,
And, never tempted—ne'er had fell.
Triumphant in unmeasured strength—
Unproved—undoubted—sin at length
Got footing once in luckless day,
And virtue's loosening hold gave way.
When first to Valombar he flew,
To Philibert and Friendship true,
Not one remotely-lurking thought
Left on his pure intent a blot;
And many a month successive came
To smile on his unsullied fame.

'Twas when o'er drooping France was cast
The hot Sirocco's smothering blast,
As from Nicopolis it brought
The deadly news that stifled thought,—
When sudden told the direful tale,
That roused the death-struck nation's wail,
'Twas then his curdling blood ran chill,
To feel a wild, unnatural thrill
Of monstrous joy his pulses fill.
Swift the empoisoned fluid flies—
And broad to his devouring eyes
Hang castles, honors and domains,
Uncounted wealth and boundless plains!
Recoiling from the basilisk dart,
That Avarice pointed at his heart,
He shuddered fearful back at first
Instinctive from the thought accursed;
But still wheree'r he turned it stung—
In hissing horror ever rung
Incessant on his burning brain—
Still, still it comes—to fly is vain,

And each new touch of whispering crime
Leaves thicker track of venomed slime.

At length the hapless victim grown
Familiar with th' insidious tone,
And coldly callous to the touch
That once had shocked and moved so much,
More calmly hearkens, and forgot
His first wild fears, he shudders not.
" What guilt in me " at length he said,
" Since my friend Philibert is dead,
" To hope possession of my own?
" And if an old man stands between,
" What mighty harm can well be seen
" To wish his soul to Heaven was flown?"—
But still the aged Count lived on;
While his impatient kinsman numbered
The slow-paced years, that tottering crept,
And swore that Time in spite had slumbered,
Or even grim Death in mockery slept.

At length from Valombar estranged,
The lost St. Clair at distance ranged;
Leagued with the bad and dissolute,
Vice urged him on in mad pursuit;
Step followed step in rapid pace;
Unchecked he rode the giddy chace,
And folly toiled to win disgrace.
But still, in scenes howe'er remote,
Stern-goading conscience keenly smote,
Picturing his pride's proud fabric shaken,
His forfeit oath, and friends forsaken.

And Isabelle, abandoned now
By him, who blended with each vow
She gave to virtue, worth and truth,
The valued friend of early youth;
Felt as if Heaven had torn away
Her latest hope of earthly stay.—

She felt what those alone can know,
What they alone may dare to tell,
Who, revelling in the golden glow
That holy friendship's splendours throw,
Are struck to earth by falsehood fell—
By treachery's cold and shrivelling blight,
That mildew of the heart's delight,
Which bends the stem, and checks the growth,
And blasts the mind and body both!—
But yet, across her suffering soul,
No noxious vapours blackly stole;
Nor did low mutterings mount on high,
Nor dark reproach, nor sullen sigh—
Clear and serene, she seemed to move
The spirit of departed Love,
In mercy left, to breathe around
Peace o'er the once-enchanted ground.

Hot Summer now, in changeful forms,
Smiles in the breeze or frowns in storms;

And vegetation's ruddy cheek,
Like youth which springs to pleasure's charms,
Bursts forth the ripening ray to seek
That withers while it warms.

To Valombar continual come
Unbidden guests, to share the home
That hospitality prepares,
For weary feet, or worldly cares.
Although no costly banquet spreads
Its rich temptations to the gay;
Nor lightsome foot in pleasure treads,
As it was wont in happier day,
Still the unbarred and welcoming gate
Opens to each sad child of fate;
And wide the spacious portals fly
To all who pine in hopeless want,
To holy monk or mendicant,
To sorrow, and to minstrelsy.
Rarely within the crowded hall
Stands she who aids the wants of all;
But should a grateful pilgrim call

To pour his blessing on her ear—
Or minstrel ask his lay to hear,
In quick compliance she will list
The voice of each poor votarist.

"The noon burns fierce" the warder cries,
As a wearied minstrel passed the porch;
"True, but the frowns of fortune scorch
"More fiercely still" the wanderer sighs;
"Yet oft'" and a smile illumed his eyes—
"The blazing rage of the hottest day
"Melts, in mild showers, at eve away.
"Thy lady, Warder! will she hear
"The lowly minstrel's lightsome measure,
"Who'd chase from beauty's eye the tear,
"And tune his lyre to notes of pleasure!"—
"Rest, rest awhile good friend! and then
"Refreshed, you'll touch a sweeter strain;
"But much I doubt my lady's mind
"Would choose the lay of lightsome kind,
"For more she loves the sorrowing tone
"That speaks of joyful moments flown."

Soon the high hall returned the sound
Which the lively lyre sent floating round,
As the minstrel sung, revived and gay,
To the well-pleased maids his sprightly lay.
And Isabelle, who listening stood,
With Zoé, in reflective mood,
With humble mien the bard besought,
She'd mark his song, with less of thought—
" His song, which told of every sweet,
" That freshly sprung the heart to greet;
" That strewed bright flowers on pleasure's day,
" And plucked each thorn of care away."

The smiling maidens forward press;
Even Zoé joins her fond caress—
But Isabelle, with serious strain,
Thus answered the imploring train.
" Oh! gentle minstrel, wander not
" To scenes of happiness like this;
" Let every image be forgot
" That points to joy, or tells of bliss;

" Withered and shrunk the blooming flowers,
" Which scattered sweets through fancy's bowers,
" Deck not for me a wreath so gay,
" Nor picture phantoms to my view,
" That fly in sportive spite away,
" And smile to see a wretch pursue."

The minstrel looked abashed, and hung
His head more low—nor further sung
In strains unmeet for sorrow's ear;
But low, deep sounds, that woe might hear
And deeper sigh, he struck anew;
And the sad note, acutely true,
Gave out exact the lengthened tone
Of some departing wretch's moan,
As with weak, faltering voice he sung,
While death seemed trembling on his tongue.

Minstrel's Song.

Hark! to the groans of the wounded brave,
As they writhe on the chilling earth—

Or faintly sigh for their common grave,
Or in fits of agony wildly rave,
And curse the hour of their birth.

Their mouths are parched—and their drooping heads
Hang listless, as they lie,
Pillowed in gore on their bloody beds,
And with fearful wailings cry
For Death—but they cannot die!
Mark yon' wretch by the brink of the brook,—
His lips almost touch the stream—
Swiftly it flows, while his wistful look
Would dry up the source, like the scorching beam;
But the rippling waves, as they gaily glide,
Seem his hopes to mock, and his pangs to deride.

That warrior, stretched on the brow of the hill,
Has expiring lain, three nights on the plain,
Damp, comfortless and chill—
While the life-blood's thick and sluggard drain
Weak, drizzling, flows—but the cruel vein
Seems full of vigour still.

With faltering tone he weakly cries
"Now welcome Heaven! now World farewe
He sinks—he faints—and his languid eyes
No longer glare on the dismal dell—
But it is not so with him who dies!
The lips unclosed—and the frightful stare
That in death is seen, are wanting there.

Slowly he moves—once more reviving,
But life renewed no transport gives;
And from transient death fresh pangs deriving
His deadliest ill, is—to know he lives!

Heaven pity the woes of the wounded brave!
As in fits of pain they wildly rave—
Or in anguish burning, with life returning,
They mourn their reprieve from the grave.

This was a theme to harmonize
With horror's self—a tone to draw

Not tears, but liquid fire to eyes
That, rolling wide, in fancy saw
The mangled bosom of her lord,
With clotted gash, unstaunched, and bare,
While burst in each terrific chord
His agonized despair!

Resistless to her chamber led,
Long time she paced, with frantic tread;
But calmer grown, reflection brought
The sudden, and ecstatic thought,
That the strange minstrel could not be
So dead to touch of sympathy,
As thus to torture her for nought,—
And in faint hope, that to his song
Some blessed allusion might belong,
With grappling eagerness she caught.
"Fly, fly my maidens! quickly bring
"That minstrel back, whose torturing string

" Has thrilled, with more than magic art,
" Prophetic on my bursting heart."

With rapid step the maids are flown
To seek the stranger—he is gone.
Quickly he passed from out the gate,
And, when the warder bade him stay,
Much marvelling that he would not wait
Till the sun beamed with milder ray—
Unpausing gave this short reply,
With meaning glance, and gesture sly,
" Thou know'st, good friend, the hottest day
" Melts in mild showers at eve away."

When Isabelle the answer heard
Her hopes gave meaning to each word—
"Mild showers at eve" she cried "tis strange!"
And deeply musing, sudden change
Quick-varying o'er each feature spread;
While, as the stare of sorrow fled,

Light, which seems more than human, breaks
From her blue eyes—and brilliant streaks
Transparent flush her paly cheeks.
Unheard the bell loud-summoning rings;
The cold repast untasted lies;
She seems to move on viewless wings—
And treading less on earth than air,
The old count safe in Zoé's care,
Quick to her shady bower she flies,
Her scattered thoughts to tranquillize.

The angry sun has sunk in fire,
And tinged the world with glow of ire;
Storm-pregnant clouds are in the east,
And thick, through Heaven's perturbed breast,
Dun masses of wild fantasy
Roll monstrous on the labouring sky.
Broad flashes, o'er the landscape, spread
In floating sheets of sickly red,
While dismal thunderings growl behind,
Borne onwards on the gusty wind.

In mid air hangs the full, clear moon;
Her silvery beam comes glimmering down,
And faintly blend the forceless rays
With the lightning's flash, and the sun's deep blaze.
Athwart the huge elm's giant limbs
The Bat in circling mazes skims;
From the obscurest branch the Owl
Casts, darkling round, benighted scowl—
A toad is croaking in the sedge;
And the hissing snake, from briary hedge
Mingling a fiercely feeble sound,
Darts quick its harmless poison round.—

What dread assemblage gathers there!
What direful omens crowd the hour—
What sounds of terror fill the air
Of Isabelle's secluded bower!
And now the rain, in pattering shower,
Drops thick upon the bending trees,
That quiver to the gloomy breeze,

And nought seems wanting to complete
A scene for guilt's dark doings meet,
Or Magic's damned solemnities.
But Isabelle, with fearless eye,
Gazed firmly on the scowling sky—
In holy reverie rapt she stood,
Close-sheltered by the' embowering wood;
And seemed, in solemn musings lost,
To mix with Heaven's aërial host.—
When hark! on the breath of the rising gale
A gentle voice slow-mingling floats;
Warbling such sounds that the troubled vale
Seems hushed by the wildly-witching notes.

"Is it the Minstrel's thrilling strain
"That wafts mysterious sounds again?
"No, no, there lived on earth but one,
"One mortal voice that breathed such tone!"

The rattling peal for a moment dumb,
Louder the' approaching warblings come,

And as the sounds advance more near,
Thus fall on the spell-bound listner's ear.

" When friendship's honest vows we breathe,
" They need not flow from roseate bowers;
" And if affection twines the wreath
" No matter where she culls the flowers."

" Shield me, Oh! shield, ye saints above!
" Blest guardian forms of holy love—
" And thou, bright shade, whose lowly grave
" Shuddering I clasp, thy daughter save!"
She sinks upon the sacred mound—
Her breath comes quick—her brain turns round,
When burst these words of rapturous sound—
" Rise, rise my Isabelle, my wife;
" To new found joy, to love and life!"
And from the rustling foliage springs
A muffled man, who fondly flings
His sheltering arms around her form,
That clung instinctive as he pressed,

And throbbed with transport, wild and warm,
Against a long-lost husband's breast.

Wrapped in a thick and sulphuric flash,
The herald of a horrid crash
That seems to crumble brazen rocks—
Closer the' intrepid stranger locks
His sinewy arms round Isabelle—
Heedless although the hot bolt fell,
And fired an old oak close beside—
Flaring it blazed! while soft he cried—
As the crackling branches flung on high
Their fierce effulgence to the sky—
"Shrink not dismayed my angel bride!
"But, with light footstep, quickly guide
"Thy thrice-blessed husband to delight—
"Oh shudder not sweet love! for see,
"The very Heavens hold jubilee,
"To grace our new-born nuptial night!"

END OF CANTO FOURTH.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO FIFTH.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE fury of the storm is o'er;
The thunder's voice is heard no more;
One breeze sweeps dying o'er the fell,
In dreary tone and lonely swell,
As if, expiring in the blast,
The tempest-demon breathed his last.
Reviving Nature seems to rise
In grateful vigour to the skies;
And with gay tints appears to spread
A greener garment o'er the mead;

The grass springs freshly up, to meet
The browsing Hare's elastic feet;
The moist grapes shine in clustering groups;
No longer down the wild-flower droops;
The merle sings fluttering on the thorn—
While riot songsters, through the brake,
From every branch pure glitterings shake
Of liquid chrystal to the morn.
O'er blossomed herbage sporting gay,
Light myriads hum in votive mirth;
And, mounting high to hail the day,
Mild exhalations bear away
The incense of adoring Earth!

If meaner nature thus can raise
The tribute offering of praise,
How springs to Heaven her noiseless vow,-
The happiest of Earth's daughters now?

How does she hail the radiant light
That breaks upon her heart's long night,
As sudden as the spring bursts forth
On dreary regions of the north,
When, ripe creation's wonders glow
Through shrouds of quick-dissolving snow.
With heart in holy ardours stored,
As sleep, love's fond embrace untying,
Steals gently o'er her bosom's lord,
In snatched and hurried slumber lying,
From couch of new-spread joy she steals,
And at the casement lowly kneels,
Pouring pure orisons aloft;
While blissful tears gush warm and soft,
For pious raptures meet;
Thus from the tree with flower-topped head,*
Before the morning dews have fled,
Flow showers of honied sweet.

* The Cotton tree, which grows in Canada, produces on the top several tufts of flowers, which when shaken, in the morning, before the dew falls off, produce honey.

Finished her vows of humble praise,
She turns, with lightened heart, to gaze
From Heaven, on him, to whom her eye
In rapid glance appears to fly,
Next worthy her idolatry!
The giddy whirl of mad delight
Had left, on the preceding night,
No power to scan each varying shade
Of change, that suffering had made,
On the loved form—she only knew
That he was there—changed, it was true,
In feature much—but in his breast
All right—she heeded not the rest.
But hanging fondly o'er his couch,
With wondering look, she watches now—
It is not that she marvels much
That time had slightly marked his brow,
Or that the blighting touch of care
Had, lingering, left its tracery there;

It was that, in his troubled sleep,
With hurried start, and groan heaved deep,
He tossed perturbed—and around
His arms he flung—and seemed to bound,
Like one that on some noxious thing
Would wish to dart with eager spring;
But groaned again. as if his breast
A phantom weight had struggling pressed,
And, with clenched hand, and close-knit frown,
Grappling, 'twould seem, the spectre down,
He cried in voice of thundering sound
"Die, hated wretch!"—Sleep shuddering flies,
While from the couch in furious bound
Upward he springs—wild roll his eyes—
A fancied falchion fills his hand,
And big drops on his raised brow stand.
Shocked Isabelle beholds his form—
Scarce shrunk she trembling from the storm,
When late Heaven's bolts tumultuous shook,
And nature shuddered—but that look!

That look of terror, seems to shoot
Death to her heart's remotest root.
But soon the dreamer seemed to throw
Aside the deep-imagined woe:
Recovering from the fancied pang,
Tow'rds her with look of love he sprang—
"Oh! Isabelle, bright angel! come,
"Breathe balm upon my tortured breast!
"Fly not that once much-treasured home,
"Though memory breaks its tranquil rest."
Once more assured, her flowing heart,
Pressed close to his, beats smooth again;
She only asks him to impart
The secret of his bosom's pain.
"Ask not, my love—'tis o'er—'tis nought
"A passing cloud—a nameless thought—
"The shadow of dark hours gone by;
"That, like the storm of yester-night,
"Far driven before the morning light,
"Serves the blue Heavens to purify.

" But list! the cheerful sounds I hear
" Of rustic joy, that on my ear
" More sweetly fall than loud acclaim,
" Of thousands shouting songs of fame.
" And see! the honest vassals bring
" In rural glee their offering—
" Let's, love, descend; my father waits
" Impatient, at the outer gates;
" We are too tardy—but I pray
" That, on this bright, auspicious day,
" Thou'lt be my prompter—for, in truth,
" Full many a form of early youth
" Is now forgot.—Mark'st thou this scar—
" The prodigal reward of war!—
" Close on my brain fell the deep stroke,
" And, much I doubt, some slight threads broke
" Of recollection's fragile web;
" For, oft' I mark, reflection's ebb
" Seems to have borne away the trace
" Of many a dearly-valued face—

" But some blest scenes— some features lie
" So deeply graven, they defy
" The efforts of corroding years—
" 'Tis thus, my life! each trait appears
" In thee, as freshly to my view,
" As when the skilful limner drew
" Each beauteous feature, smiling bright,
" In days of early love's delight."

With tender look, and moment's pause,
Here, from his bosom, forth he draws
The well-known portrait, safe from harm—
" Mark, my beloved! the potent charm,
" That ever kept this true heart free
" From aught unworthy love and thee."

Doubtful she seemed to gaze awhile,
Then turned away, with pensive smile—
" Alas! 'tis true, this once was me
" But me no more—though vanity

" Would whisper still that I am fair,
" As when I sat in transport there,
" In blushing hope, a promised bride,
" And caught from thee, who stood'st beside,
" The smile that o'er thy features shone,
" Which the false artist made my own.
" Yes! I am changed indeed since then;
" And can my Philibert again
" Fix his fond look, with constant ray,
" Upon a blighted flower's decay?"

" Too lovely Isabelle! no more
" Let sound like this escape thy lips—
" I, as the bee returning sips
" The rose whose young buds pleased before,
" Have left the world's abandoned swarms,
" To light on thy meridian charms."

Like lovers thus, in converse sweet,
The unmarked minutes quickly fleet,

Till Zoé comes to summon both—
Sportive, she chides her mother's sloth;
Then hides, abashed, her blushing face,
Within her stranger sire's embrace.

Many a brilliant dawn has shone
Hearts of happiest mould upon;
Beamed o'er many a beauteous cheek,
And raised the lids of eyes that speak;
But never morning blithely broke,
On eyes more bright, or hearts more bounding,
Than this, upon the serfs, who woke
The wild woods to their shouts resounding.
Let tumult swell the venal crowd,
Trumpet and timbrel flourish loud;
Lungs bellow praises, till the throat
Quakes as it gives the noisy note;
And flattery strain to add to art;—
All falls a dead weight on the heart,
And discord to the ear—but when
True feeling bursts from honest men,

The rudest sound can yield a tone
That melody itself might own!

Through Valombar such sounds as this
Tell now the vassals' heart-felt bliss;
The old towers answer, loud and long,
The clamour of the festive throng;
And echo speaks in joy again,
Starting, to hear the cheering sound
Where grief so lately held its reign,
While silence centineled the ground.
The wond'rous news flew quickly on;
The little world around poured out;
Young, old, well, ailing, sire and son,—
All hurried forth, to join the rout,
And raise the animating shout,
Which rung to hail that new-found one,
With gloomy pride so long deplored—
But now, once more their own "young Lord."

He stands in the midst, like some column'd shaft,
Which has braved all the ills that the bleak winds waft;
While the old Count rests on his lusty arm,
Beat down by Time's tempestuous harm,
A splendid fragment of the wall
That leans 'gainst the pillar in its fall.
And Isabelle, and Zoé too!
O never yet the pencil drew
A lovelier group, though taste might fling
Its worlds of sweet imagining.

Let not the feeble pen essay
To paint the raptures of the day;
Let the light heart, that gaily beats,
Picture the sweetly-touching scene;
The crowd that gambols on the green,
The rifled garden's fragrant sweets—
The rural wardrobe's gaudiest store—
The gay pavilions floating o'er—
The dance, the music and the song—
The shout that answering crowds prolong—

The nameless grace—the witching zest
That springs each sport to animate,
When joy runs riot in the breast,
And nature's children hold their fete.
The larder yields its deepest hoard,
The cellar pours its oldest treasure,
To grace the hospitable board—
For well the tables must be stored
When appetite keeps pace with pleasure.

The feast is done, and every eye
Now turns to him who sits on high,
Presiding in the chair again
That long untenanted had lain.
Count Walderne speaks—and every tongue
That late in busy babbling rung,
Is instant hushed—he thus begun,—
"Prop of my house, my valiant Son,
"My Philibert! no more defer
"Thy marvellous tale, that every ear

" Expectant waits; but haste to tell,
" What wonder-working miracle
" Has given thee back, once more to be
" The soul of our festivity,
" And source of lengthened life to me."

" My ever-honored sire, my friends,
" My wife, my child, endearing names!
" Associate links, whose union blends
" With every thought my fancy frames—
" Whose hopes and wishes, mingling, twine
" Their tendril tracery through mine—
" I haste to gratify the call
" Made by my sire in name of all.
" Spare me the direful tale of terror,
" When the broad plain, a bloody mirror,
" Reflected from its bosom red
" The ghastly thousands hacked and dead.—
" I must not tell the horrid pain,
" When life suspended came again,
" And torments tingled through each vein;

" But let me paint the wild surprize
" That broke on my re-opening eyes.—
" When on the field of death I fell,
" 'Midst scenes I must not, cannot tell,
" My eyes seemed closing on a hell—
" Bodies scarce dead around me lay,
" Half putrid in the fiery ray,
" And sounds were whizzing on my ear,
" Such as the damned might quake to hear.
" When I revived, each scattered thought,
" To my 'mazed mind, conviction brought
" That the emancipated soul
" Had cast aside Earth's chill controul;
" And lived in brighter realms; for round
" A scene of wonder met my stare;
" No form intruded, not a sound
" Ruffled the still but fragrant air;
" I lay upon a bed of flowers,
" That seemed fresh culled from sweetest bowers,

" A star-enamelled canopy
" Of countless gems was hung on high,
" And beamed with lustre dazzling bright,
" Illumined by a lamp's soft light—
" While numberless reflections threw
" Splendours of many a sparkling hue.
" Ice-drops, from purest oozings made,
" Hung pendent down, while softly played
" A gushing fount, whose waters strayed
" In winding ripplings through the shade.
" Trees, shrubs, and flowers, appeared to stand
" Fresh planted by some fairy hand,
" Of every colours' varying hue ;
" In groups to magic wildness true.—
" The brilliant cheatery to disprove,
" No fluttering Zephyr came to move
" The branches of this breezeless grove ;
" Nor shook, from flower, nor shrub, nor tree,
" Its chrystalized embroidery.

" My senses, wildered at this burst
" Of soft magnificence, at first
" Believed all Heaven — but, o'er my frame,
" A purely mortal rapture came,
" To find, reposing on my breast,
" Thy portrait safe, my Isabelle!
" Oh! with what fervent warmth I blest
" The unknown hand, that knew so well
" The mystery of the healing art,
" Which cures the body through the heart;
" And placed within my readiest reach
" That object, which could truest teach
" My wakening feelings to rejoice
" That earth held still a paradise.

" The cooling air had hushed to rest
" The pangs that lately tore my breast,
" While healing salves o'erspread each wound,
" By neatest fillets cautious bound; —

" And slowly, in that pride of years
" When manliness dissolves in age,
" And snowy tresses mark the sage,
" A venerable form appears:
" A reverend anchorite was he—
" His words the breath of sanctity,
" His looks like light beyond the grave—
" Such was the Genius of the cave.
" Such was the saint-like man who trod
" The battle-field's empurpled sod,
" When Night proclaimed the carnage o'er,
" And my yet-breathing body bore
" Through heaps of slain, and seas of gore.
" Behold me saved by him—now see
" The brave deliverer die by me!
" Nay start not—let me hurry through
" The cloud of grief that dims my view—
" The blood-hounds knew the Hermit well—
" They sought him in his sparry cell—

" They found me with him—'twas enough—
" A victim saved—the fact was proof,
" They slew him! Me, with deadlier hate,
" They dragged to more ignoble fate;
" Me—must my free mind breathe the thought
" Whose very memory leaves a blot
" On Freedom's purity?—a slave!
" Chained to the world—one living grave;
" Bound to the earth, whose hateful soil
" Was watered by the sweat of toil;
" Stripes my reward—reproach my wages—
" Five dreary years drawled on like ages—
" Life was despair! but yet on high
" My mind beheld the' allseeing eye,
" And shuddering heard the loud command
" That stayed my half-uplifted hand.

" Still might my body rot in chains,
" Or sweltering droop on turkish plains,
" Had not one gallant heart been nigh
" To give me life in liberty.—

" It boots not here to tell the pains,
" The perils that unloosed our chains,
" And brought us to our native plains—
" For France in him has right to claim
" A son, who dignifies her name.
" A fellow-sufferer, 'twas he
" Whose cautious valour set us free;
" And yester-morn, my steps preceding,
" He whose bold harmony so well,
" While at each note his heart was bleeding,
" Prepared thy soul, my Isabelle,
" Though sad I fear his warnings fell.
" He watched thee to thy sacred bower—
" He sought me at that anxious hour,
" When, heedless of the tempest's rage,
" My trembling voice gave forth, once more,
" The sounds which best thy fears might 'swage,
" The happy strains of days of yore—

"Here stands my friend, and ne'er shall quit
"This refuge while my name bears sway;
"Or while the friends who value it
"Cherish the memory of this day."

He ended here — the closing word
Scarce died upon the festive board,
When bursts of gratulation rung
The halls around, from every tongue;
And the glad crew profusely poured
Welcomes on him who saved their lord.

The vassals now are homewards going,
Their hearts in joyous floods o'erflowing;
But in the loveliest wreath of Love
A withered leaf is sometimes seen;
And blasted branches through the grove
Disfigure the surrounding green —

So here a few were found, who once
Had bounded tow'rds delight like this,
But gave not now one faint response,
To own their fellows' clamorous bliss.
Death to their hopes was in each sound;
Ruin in every smile they found;
A cursed band—St. Clair's sworn friends,
The baneful engines of his ends—
Purveyors of his spendthrift wants—
Their hire anticipated grants,
Thick-mortgaged portions of the land—
For these they filled his craving hand,
And every hour looked out to hail
His heritage, their grandeur's birth,
But now in bitterness bewail
Their air-built castles dash'd to earth.

They seek him with malicious speed;
They find him in his hour of need—

As the hot Arab sucks the breeze
That wafts him pestilent disease,
So does St. Clair fling wide his arms
To hail these messengers of harms.
" Friends of my heart," he wildly cries,
" I see it in your glistening eyes,
" I read it in the eager flush
" That to your honest cheeks will rush,
" He's dead— he's dead! the old man's gone—
" A day— an hour— and all's our own—
" A moment, and our broad hands clutch
" The whole! you've brought supplies? How much?
" Unhinge your well-filled coffers now—
" Joy, my best friends! Pour forth! Wine ho!
" Let's, in the gaily-conscious bowl,
" Pledge peace to cousin Walderne's soul! "

No answer meets his rhapsody—
No smile gives back the wished reply—

But on each face a snarling grin
Flashes, like light from hell within :
The truth comes forth— the dreadful truth—
Told think you in relenting ruth?
No, but with taunt, reproach and threat,
That make the shock more horrid yet.

Speechless—o'erwhelmed—transfixed, St. Clair
Stands, while dark thoughts deep-torturing tear,
And riot in his heart's despair.
But say what secrecy defies
The glances of self-interest's eyes—
What mystery may succeed to ride
Unharmed the surge that crests her tide?
Loud laughs St. Clair—no phrenzied tone
Sent out from Reason's vacant throne,
But a loud laugh of hellish glee
Fit for a demon's revelry.
Frowning he cries : " And must I stoop
" To you, a congregated group

" Of paltry miscreants, whose fears
" Come dinning, threatning in my ears?
" You, whose gross murkiness of mind
" Casts shadows forth that make you blind.
" Philibert living! off, ye slaves,
" And root Bulgaria's rotten graves
" For his blanched bones—He, he alive!
" What bold impostor comes to shrive
" Transfigured ghosts—confess the dead—
" Then rouse the spectre from its bed!
" What think ye, wretches? speak, ye vile!
" You answer with demoniac smile—
" You're pleased—'tis well—you then recal
" The story of my kinsman's fall;
" Your palsied memories shake not now;
" And recollection tells you how
" Beholders marked, with wonder strange,
" Philibert and his murderer range
" The battle's heat—so like, 'twas said
" The shuddering Turk shrunk back with dread,
" And thought them spirits of the dead!

" Who, think ye, reigns in Valombar?
" Who, but this Pierre arrived from far!
" 'Tis needless now to press the fact—
" My mind convinced, my arm shall act—
" Quick to my lawful rights I rush
" The daring reprobate to crush;
" Rest tranquil then—our joint endeavour
" Must push the' adventurer out for ever—
" But first unstring your common purse.—
" Ye hesitate—by Heaven's worst curse!
" By Hell's severest pang! I swear
" Should but your griping avarice dare
" Refuse, I'll fly, and hail as heir
" Th' usurper through the' applauding air!
" Ha! touched—then pour, ye venal rout—
" All emptied—now, base rabble, out!"—

A little month had passed in haste
Since old Count Walderne held the feast,
In joy for his recovered son;
Fleet as the winds the hours ran on,
And day was scarcely marked till gone.
Unbroken by discordant jar
Are the mild joys of Valombar;
And while its inmates fondly trace
The memory of departed days,
The soothing task appears to bring
New nerve to life's relaxing string.
All is tranquility again,
Nor transitory glimpse of pain
Hangs, cloud-like, o'er the verdant plain.
Within the castle all is still;
Joy flows in smooth unbroken stream,
As purely as the languid rill
That glistening woos the moonlight beam:

Within the castle all is calm,
The social circle breathe in balm;
When, rising from the court without,
They hear a murmured din;
And uproar's loud, vociferous shout
Comes fiercely poured from rabble rout,
As if the ruffian jar would flout
The sweet repose within.
Thick-clattering feet are trooping on;
And clashing swords, and angry tone,
And threat, and imprecation loud
Proclaim some bold and hostile crowd.

The sire, the daughter, and the wife
Shrink back from this rude crash of strife;
But he to whom for aid they turn
Hotly impetuous seems to burn,
As if the sounds were life!

Quick is his ponderous sword unstrung
From off the wall, where huge it hung,
And o'er the three his left arm flung,
His look is majesty—
His brow seems gathering for command—
Already is the well-proved brand
Broad-glittering in his nervous hand,
And battle in his eye.

The door flies wide—he rushes on—
A bleeding servant comes alone.—
"My lord, a mad, inebriate troop,
"With threatning and ferocious whoop,
"Force the unguarded stair"—
The words scarce spoke to earth he fell—
When, heralded by desperate yell,
Like maniac bursting from his cell,
In bellowing bounds St. Clair.
Determined purpose on his brow
He cries: "Impostor yield—" but lo!

Ere the disjointed sentence slips
From out his speech-refusing lips,
He stands as if all sense had flown,
Benumbed and motionless as stone—
For while his bold and haughty foe
Upholds the death-impending blow,
He darts a look, from piercing eye,
Of mixed contempt and scrutiny.
St. Clair, bewildered, turned askance,
As if the stern-encountering glance
Refulgent seemed to shine,
In splendour more than sight might brave;
For never conscious virtue gave
Demeanour more divine:
Nor e'er could Philibert's godlike face
Beam with a more tremendous grace
In dangers bloodiest day.—
St. Clair shrunk backward from that look,
Like rolling mists upon the brook
Before the morning's ray—

"Tis sorcery spreads this web" he cries;
"I sink before a wizard's eyes,
"In magic toils I stray,
"Whose blasted arts have caught the light
"That beamed from Philibert's glances bright;
"Death fills this dire magician's gaze,
"For living look casts not such blaze"—
And then, like one he turned his face
Whom fear makes callous to disgrace,
And shuddering slunk away;
While all his bullying band retrack
Their hasty steps in terror back,
Now emulous in flight alone—
Dispersed and shattered by—a frown!

So fast they fled, so strange the scene,
It seemed as though it had not been,
But, as if frolic fancy wrought
The curious freak to puzzle thought.

The old Count gazed in wonder round;
From Isabelle escaped no sound;
Her eyes, more eloquent than words,
Were fondly fixed upon her lord's—
Thought of the daring slander streaks
With angry pride her blushing cheeks;
While Zoé clings, secure from hurt,
Close to her father's mantle-skirt.

First opened then the lips of age:
"What meant the raving ruffian's rage"
Count Walderne cries—"and does he dare,
"Abandoned, profligate St. Clair,
"To magnify his infamy
"By flinging this attaint on thee?"
He turns for answer to his son,
But vainly turns, for answer none
Nor gesture gives reply;
There nothing spoke but high disdain;
As if the very thought was pain,

That called him to remove the stain
From his insulted dignity.
He stalked the room with haughty stride,
When Isabelle on sudden cried,
" But say my Philibert, why not once
" Have I yet heard thy lips pronounce
" That marvellous, that mysterious name,
" Whose memory chills my shuddering frame;
" But which, to thine so sadly joined,
" Comes darkly still within my mind
" Perpetual blending—Pierre?" her look
Asked for reply, yet scarce could brook
The fury of his answering eyes;
Where gathering angers seemed to rise,
Upflying in a passionate glow,
That fired his cheek and flushed his brow.
Thus did his visage madly gleam
In the full horrors of his dream;
Now, as 'twas then, a moment o'er
And the dark storm is seen no more.

In tone subdued, yet mingling still
With calm returned the breath of ill,
He answered her—"Oh! wonder not
"If sometimes, on my harrowed thought,
"That damned sound comes down, like fire,
"To light enjoyment's funeral pyre—
"If, at the sudden shock, I find
"The slumbering lightnings of my mind,
"Struck by collision of that name,
"Flash wide, till all within is flame.
"Oft' in my very dreams, the sting
"Will come on torture's blazing wing;
"In the broad glare the hot brain burns—
"The flash is gone—and peace returns.
"Wonder not then my Isabelle,
"At my wronged heart's indignant swell,
"Which angry spurned the hated name
"Though from your angel lips it came."

"Forgive me, Philibert! oh! well
"Thy bosom's movements may I tell;
"The maddening agonies that throng
"When outraged friendship broods on wrong—
"And if I feel this inward thrill,
"That startles at remembered ill,
"How must *thy* memory writhe to dwell
"One moment on that traitor fell!
"Oh pardon! nor remembered be
"This first—last pang bestowed by me."
Thus spoke affection—by one word,
One glance of kindness reassured—
But the' old count sighed, as if his breast
Some bursting mystery repressed.

Meanwhile, like those who stoutly dare
To laugh at fear in day's broad glare,
But quake in midnight grove,—
Did foiled St. Clair long to and fro,
Loud-blustering pace the courts below,
And threats of fierce defiance throw
Against the foe above.—

His drooping gangs' alarm he cheers,
Forgets his own to quiet theirs;
And swears if France has law for right
Or punishment for evil,
The villain, whose unearthly sight
Had put him with a glance to flight,
Shall soon re-greet his liege the devil!
An answering yell of loud applause,
Sent forth for "Justice and the laws,"
And threatning looks and brandished swords,
Closed this display of valorous rage
From the hot band, who strode the stage
Free from a foe—dread war to wage,
With witchcraft and with words.

END OF CANTO FIFTH.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO SIXTH.

PHILIBERT.

CANTO SIXTH.

ALIKE o'er innocence and crime
Wings his firm flight stupendous, Time!
Though some, with pleasure's sun-bright eyes,
Feign that in lightning speed he flies,
His pinions dipped in rainbow dyes;
And, gleaming to their glance of mirth,
A joyous youth of heavenly birth.—
To others, woe and sufferings
Come flapping from his heavy wings,
And to the wretch's vision still
He crawls, decrepid, old and chill.

But yet he holds his steady course,
O'er virtue's calm and guilt's remorse;
And marks new change, round Valombar,
Fill varying each revolving day,
While, fame the record spreading far,
Another year has passed away.
In this eventful year of strife,
The racking heats of contest seem
To dry the very sap of life,
From those who labour in its beam—
St. Clair urged on with vigourous might,
Toiling to vindicate his right;
With the bold warmth conviction gives
Against his steady foe he strives—
With proof and promise, threat and bribe,
He, and his all-complying tribe,
Strove strenuous through each fresh delay
That lagged through each successive day:
But who needs learn the lingering pause
That clogs the tardy-moving laws?

Who has not marked the public mind
Veer with the ever-shifting wind,
As interests clash or passions blind?
Who has not seen guilt boldly stalk
Secure on virtue's purest walk,
Nor heard the loud, foredooming breath
That sends the untried wretch to death!

On these trite truths, that all can tell,
It boots not loitering here to dwell—
Suffice to say, the' accusing crew
Proofs heaped on proofs together threw;
" The battle, witnessed by the few
Spared, as by Heaven in miracle,
The all-important truth to tell
How Philibert had fought and fell.—
The stranger's coming—the boding night
Which brought his monstrous guilt to light—
The unassumed forgetfulness,
If such it *could* be—marked by all,
When round the' impostor in the hall
The joyous group were seen to press;

While he, as new, met many a face
Of serfs, who oft', in hardy chace
And youthful sports, most frequent shared
The toils young Philibert had dared.
And then, those deep, abstracted fits
That cloud those brows, where torturing flits
The heart-appalling shade of guilt,
Or pang for blood unrighteous spilt;
Unlike the never-changed serene
Of Philibert's well-remembered mien.—
The wondrous likeness of the face
To Philibert, close research might trace,
In brothers by unusual hap,
As branches fed from common sap;
But what deep lore could bring to view
Resemblance, so minutely true,
In those unlinked by tie of blood,
And sprung from unconnatural brood;
Except through magic's hellish arts,
That changes forms and governs hearts?

By whose black aid the sorcerer may
Have worked thus far his desperate way,
Blinding the old Count's dotage well,
And, by some philtric potion's spell,
Warping the mind of Isabelle."

Proofs, backed with reasoning, thus preferred,
By him, the accused, were calmly heard;
And when interrogations thronged,
With Law's unending forms prolonged,
He gave, with brow unmoved, unbent,
Cold negative, or short assent:
Such clear composure in his look
Its very meekness cast rebuke—
His harsh accusers' stern glance sunk,
As if within themselves they shrunk;
And even the Judges' prying gaze
Turned from his answering eye's mild blaze.
Resolveless, in conflicting doubt
They paused to give their sentence out,

While truth's broad balance trembling hung,
And with unfixed vibration swung.

At length, each searching question asked,
By which the fact may be unmasked,
And every answer duly weighed,
Of doubt there lingers not a shade—
For "How could villainy" they cry
"Thus give to outward truth the lie?
"What mortal memory could avail
"To treasure up each trivial tale,
"And paint, with all the glow of truth,
"The artless scenes of earliest youth—
"Nay more—the very secrets know
"Which from confiding lovers flow!
"Impossible! and nought we see
"Of unproved magic's agency,
"Or guilt, but the conspiracy
"Formed boldly by this ravenous heir,
"Who'd crush the Count his rights to wear."

This said—deep pondered every fact,
The tribunal, by solemn act,
Acquits Count Philibert of the charge;
The court's dissolved, and he at large!
At large—but no contemptuous smile,
The common pride of vulgar wile,
Plays on his lip—no haughty frown
Strikes now, his foiled accuser down;
If aught may on his brow be traced
'Tis pity for his foe disgraced.

And where was Isabelle the while?
Harboured her breast one doubt of guile—
Did she, when late the fickle crowd,
With execration deep and loud,
Cursed, as a culprit clogged with blood,
Him they now shout for as a God—
Did she a moment vacillate,
Or tremble for his dubious fate?

No—firm in faith, confiding, warm,
Her heart repelled each chill alarm;
When power, with proud, presuming beck,
Her bold reliance strove to check,
And angry multitudes reproved—
She smiled, and turned to him she loved!
O this is love! fast-clinging still
Through danger, ignominy, ill—
Spurning suspicion's tangly thread,
Whose toils may impotently spread,
Feeble as Gossamer, that weaves
Its flimsy tissue o'er the leaves,
Hangs to the morn in frail festoon,
But fades before the breath of noon.—
This, this is love—and oh! if e'er
This passion, tenderly sublime,
Is doomed a sorrowing pang to bear
By some foul spoiler's dastard crime,

Oh! blame it not; but while you swell,
The ingrate wretch to execrate,
Let every burst of passion tell
Indignant grief for beauty's fate;

To very madness goaded now,
St. Clair, by imprecating vow,
Invoked each power of hate to rise
And rouse his vengeful energies.
Engulphing ruin's greedy spasm
Opes for the wretch a dreary chasm;
And fate, in forced matureness ripe,
Half grasps its prey with deadly gripe.
Maugre the sentence blazoned out,
And hailed by earth's applauding shout,
He still maintains his bold belief—
His accusation, fixed and brief,
Uprises from defeat and scorn,
Like Phenix from the fire new born.

Ardent he seeks fresh proofs anew,
Backed by his never-tiring crew;
They fail him not, but not for love
Of Truth's bright holiness they strove;
On slaves like them, of recreant mind,
Truth's broad effulgence falls to blind;
And gain, their God, alone controuls
The homage of their sordid souls.
Enthusiasts at his shrine they toil,
And in far prospect clutch their spoil;
Afar and wide they spread the fame
Of Valombar's disputed claim;
And, as the tale is bruited round,
All France reverberates the sound.

Meanwhile the Summer's lingering ray
Dies in more temperate months away;
And ere they mark mild autumn gone
Half of its course has winter run.—

Unmantled here in storm or cloud,
Nor wrapped in frost's petrific shroud
Doth Winter come—but softly treads
Upon the' unchilled and verdant meads,
Wafting a breeze, so calmly cool
As ruffles scarce the limpid pool.
No thick fogs hover o'er the heath,
Through which the wretch must toil for breath;
No tempests desolate the skies,
Nor prone to earth the shrubbery lies;
The cheerless snow-shower's sullen flakes
Fall not to saturate the lakes;
Nor frozen streams impede the barge,
But the free river roams at large.

Yet sometimes should the brooks display
An icy surface to the day,
So thinly is the frost-work laid,
Like gauze upon a mirror spread,
It shews each dabbling fin below,
And melts in morning's mildest glow.—

And if the stream, by mountain rains
Unusual swelled, invades the plains,
The startled stranger feels at length
Hoarse winter come in gloomy strength;
And shrinks, prepared to see roll forth
The sweeping torrent of the north—
Chilled by anticipating fear,
Hearkens the tyrant's roar to hear;
Longs for his cloak—that hangs at home—
The while his wondering glances roam—
Sweet breathes the breeze—the branches sprout—
The flowerets bloom—the buds shoot out—
The lark towards Heaven his pinions spreads—
The floods resume their channeled beds—
All nature, o'er the pregnant plain,
Shews life, for lo! 'tis spring again.

And while throughout the new-leafed grove
Young nestlings chirp their songs above,
On Valombar's re-echoing walls
A sound of blither joyaunce falls—

For Isabelle, to crown the height
Of her husband's hope, and her own delight,
With one more pledge of general joy,
Gives birth to a beauteous boy.

Fain would I pause, to mark awhile
The mother's joy, the father's smile,
All the wild revelry of bliss
Attendant on a birth like this,
That gave a lineal heir to hold
The title, honoured as 'twas old—
But the flitting forms of guilt appear,
And gathering groans assail my ear.—
Hasten we then to the closing scene
Of a tragic tale, where joy between
Each deeper tone would struggling rise;
Like blithe notes, scattered through the air
'That breathes of sorrow and despair,
In Erin's mournful melodies.

And here, even here, though wild as vain,
And all irrelevant the strain;
Though critic brows, severely bent,
Frown forth the well-earned chastisement;
Erin, to thee my voice I raise,
And blend thy sorrows with my lays!
Thy name has touched the chord, whose thrill
Wakes wild vibration through my breast;
Reviving by its witchery still
The spirit that had sunk to rest—
But which, when worldly hope was young,
To bolder flights my rude lyre strung;
As stretched by Curraghmore's wild brake,
Or Moonavalla's mountain lake;
Reclined upon the scanty sward
In all the day-dreams of a bard,
I gazed upon the plain below,
Which fancy lit with Freedom's glow;
Pure shades of Greece, in patriot band,
Flung their full glories o'er the land,

While country claimed the rugged rhime,
And sun-bright visions warmed the clime.

Alas! the early pageant o'er,
Distant I pace a foreign shore;
And meet that other hands than mine
Thy wreath of wretchedness should twine—
Thy woe is a repulsive theme,
And needs that minstrel, known to fame,
Whose bold complainings rise and fall
So mournful, yet so musical!
Whose sweet lament can cheer the toils
That wander through a waste of weeds;
And light with lustre, more than smiles,
The hopeless path o'er which it leads.
I know not, ask not, why or how
That thou art thus defaced and low—
Let others cavil for the cause
Of homeless huts, and outraged laws;
For me 'tis only left to turn
My full eyes where my fellows mourn;

And—as this living globe grows warm
Receding from day's splendid orb—
To feel thy griefs my soul absorb,
While distance lends a stronger charm—
Brighter to glow thus far from thee,
The sun that warms and lightens me!

But other theme demands the song—
The tale, abandoned all too long,
Recals my wildly truant pen,
Which points to Valombar again.
Round it the world's rude clamour passed,
Unheeded as the empty blast—
A talisman was on the walls;
Complacent pleasure in the halls;
Each heart beat high, with life new stored,
Save one—the venerable lord.
Drooping apace, life's lambent flame
Shot faintly through his bending frame;

And nature, drawing to its close,
Waned gradual on to calm repose;
His spirit fluttered o'er decay,
And longed to sigh itself away.
The softened lustre of his eye
Would fix, in mild complacency,
On the dear group that watched his bed,
And smoothed the pillow to his head—
Yet oft' the lids would close again,
As if to shut out forms of pain;
Low sighs some hidden sorrow speak,
And hectic tinge suffuse his cheek.

Lured by young summer's sunny smile,
He sometimes left the antique pile;
And with his old confessor strayed
To silent copse or secret glade:
With Zoé oft', more oft' alone,
Raised his pure prayer to mercy's throne;
No witness on his solitude
But Heaven, whose eye transpierced the wood,

While outstretched branches waving high,
And, spread below, the verdant sod,
Fit temple formed for piety
That poured its praise to nature's God.

Thus passed the year—and now they hold
The anniversary of that day,
When the strange minstrel's warnings bold
Led on his friend's returning way—
And this is now a day of mirth,
More dear from the auspicious birth;
And even the old Count's languid eyes
A brighter, happier flash supplies:
Retiring, as the eve came on,
He took from Isabelle her son;
With fervent warmth, he fondly pressed
The little stranger to his breast;
And, clasping him in faint embrace,
With all religion's solemn grace,
Prayed loud for years of peace and joy,
Showered down in blessings on the boy.

The pious invocation o'er,
His eye fell languid down once more—
" And now my friends " he gently said,
" Night woos me to my early bed;
" My full heart bids you all farewell;
" Yet while in peaceful joy I swell,
" One stubborn taint of early sin
" Hangs blackly on the calm within;
" For utterance calls with ceaseless might,
" And struggling works its way to light.
" Pride kept it back, but duty's call
" Bursts the dark secret's close enthrall;
" And my dear son's detracted fame
" Asks loud my early guilt to name,
" When, urged by ruin on to dare
" Accuse my Philibert, St. Clair
" Mixed Magic in his monstrous heap,
" Scarce would the burning secret keep;
" And had the tribunal given ear
" To the vile slander, 'tis not here

" The world should first have heard me tell
" A truth, that solves the miracle,
" And melts the mighty wonder down
" Of the strange likeness in my son
" With that dark wretch, whose loathed name
" Thrills through my mind, a pulse of shame.
" Exhausted now, I seek repose;
" But when tomorrow's noon-tide glows
" Here meet me all whose ears desire
" The last confession of a sire,
" Anxious to prove to mortal eye
" His child's Heaven-witnessed purity."

He's gone—and whispered murmurs rise,
Of strange conjecture and surprize;
And soon each tongue expresses loud
The separate wonders of the crowd:
But he, of all concerned the most,
Stands in untalking reverie lost.
He speaks not—sighs not—motions not—
But all within is busy thought.—

What feelings work, what fancies rise;
To move his lip and light his eyes,
None may divine — each bounding spring
Of inward force that shakes his frame,
Might be nought — every — any thing —
Emotion for his slandered fame —
Pride wounded — wonderment — alarm —
Past danger, or projected harm.
None, each, or all were given to view,
Incongruous, separate, or combined,
As passion lent its different hue
To colour the observer's mind.
'Twas thus that Isabelle's fond eyes
Saw nought but wide and wild surprize,
Mixed with deep suffering's natural frown,
By memory's cruel touch drawn down.
But one dark witness lingered there,
Whose deep suspicions did not share
This belief — a minion of St. Clair —
One of that vile, degraded race,
Which writhes in infamy's embrace —

Of cowardice and cunning born—
Held by guilt's veriest dregs in scorn—
A human leech—a crawling thing
That cringes round the nobly good;
Sucks the full tide of honor's spring,
And fattens on its victim's blood—
A spy! O short but eloquent word,
Breathed never but to be abhorred;
Expansive sound, whose little name
Speaks all that language tells of shame!

This wretch, with feigned contrition, flew
To Valombar's forgiving halls;
But, ever to his mission true,
Catches each word that heedless falls;
And now his watchful looks perceive,
That which his ready hopes believe,
In the deep, hectic flush a glow
Of hidden guilt, and secret throe.

None other's hope or wish he heeds,
But quick to his employer speeds—
Thus Heaven, on works of wonder bent,
Uses the meanest instrument.

An anxious night the castle knows;
Conjecture banishes repose,
And morning's beam, which sleep forbids,
Weighs down the care-encumbered lids.
And Isabelle, who rises soon,
Her lord entreats, that until noon
(The' eventful hour that must reveal
The truth his heart's forebodings tell)
He may be left alone to rest,
And smooth his ruffled thoughts oppressed.
His wish, her will, is strict obeyed—
The morning wanes, and to the shade
Count Walderne solitary strayed;
Secret and calm, to gather power
To bear him through the' appointed hour.

Cloudless, the Heavens gave forth no hue
But deep intensity of blue;
So clear, so exquisitely bright,
'Twould almost seem the arduous sight
Might pierce the' unfathomed depths of air,
And view the glories hidden there.
No wavy breezes kissed the grass,
To move its shadow as they pass;
The smoke thin-curling rose on high
In curveless column to the sky;
On languid wing the swallow swung,
The fig's broad drapery flaccid hung;
The feathered warbler's trembling note
Half uttered left his gasping throat—
Heat ruled the hours that slowly came,
Borne on a silent breath of flame.—
Tis burning noon—but nought restrains
The gathering vassals' anxious trains;
They press in throngs—but where is he,
The mark of their expectancy?

The old lord comes not yet — has sleep
Seized on him in his secret keep?
Or oh! has death's untimely hand
Quenched with cold grasp life's flickering brand!
Alarm is on the crowd — they fly
In straggling groups, and far and nigh
The woods return their several cry.

Zoé has chosen her path alone.—
Her grandsire's haunts to her best known,
She hastes to search his favourite spots,
His shaded glens and silent grots.
Scarce in the woods, when hark! a tone
Of piercing thrill—'tis Zoé's own!
A wild — unparalelled — maniac shriek,
Whose voice the grave's cold sleep might break—
Led by the horrid sound along,
Rushes the terror-stricken throng—
The paths intricate, long they grope
Their way adown the' obstructed slope;

At length a little grotto reached,
Oh sight of horror! Zoé stretched,
Lies at the mouth, all feeling flown,
Cold as if death had struck her down;
And prostrate on the earth beyond,
Her grandsire's body pressed the ground.
Death, but not nature's death, was stamped
On his pale face— convulsed and cramped,
Each separate feature gave to view
Murder's most foul and ghastly hue.
The livid lip, in anguish curved—
The brow by fierce contortions swerved—
The glassy eyes where pain had burned,
Whose starting balls still wild upturned—
The truth required no track of blood;
But o'er his breast the thick, red flood
Poured copious from three several wounds,
Close in the heart's immediate bounds.
Oh! twas a practised arm that wrought
The death-blows on this vital spot—

But the trained murderer met to day,
Even in old age, a stubborn prey;
For on the bloody surface round
A furious struggle marked the ground—
The Count in wide-torn garments lay,
As if he fought his life away:
One hand deep gashed, as though it made
A desperate snatch to wrest the blade;
The other, in fast firmness, clenched
A jet black lock, by death-grasp wrenched
Convulsive from the' assassin's head—
—This was the picture of the dead.

Congealing horror seized the band;
And for awhile, each nerveless hand
Refused the ghastly corse to touch,
Or lift from off her woeful couch
The senseless Zoé—but at length
Compassion strung their arms with strength;

They raise her up, with soothing care,
And forth the murdered body bear:
The sad procession totters out,
While gushing blood-stains mark its route—
And as they issue forth, a throng
Of the shocked household pours along;
For the hoarse Guaite,* with straining breath,
Sends forth the summoning cry of death.
With terror's breathless haste they flew;
The rest outstripping far were two,
In that mad speed, which rushes on
To danger's gulf when hope is gone;
Thus Isabelle, in wild alarm,
Comes borne upon her husband's arm.

A volume-speaking glance she flings
Upon the stiffening corse—then springs,

* The *guaite* was a kind of centinel, placed in the belfry of the *château*, whose daily employment was to announce, with a horn, the rising of the sun to call the country-people to their labour. The *guaite* gave also the signal of the *huée*; that is, the cry which was sent out when a murder or robbery was committed, and which flew from vassal to vassal through the extent of the fief, with more speed, if not more solemnity, than the summons of the fiery cross of scotland.

As if within her strained embrace
Her Zoé's death-like sleep to chace.
Pressed to her heart the girl awakes;
A wandering range her first glance takes—
Her woe-struck father meets her eyes,
When, with such wildly-piercing scream
As sudden bursts from frenzy's dream,
"Oh murderer! father!" loud she cries.
"Great Heavens—she raves!" exclaimed her sire,
Beating his breast in anguish wild,
"Thou'st snatched my father in thy ire,
"But spare, in mercy spare my child!"

Her lids reope—again her gaze
Fixes on him—again a blaze
Is darting from her frantic eye—
Murderer! and father! still her cry.
The startled concourse, gathered round,
No longer read each gaping wound
For evidence—terrific light
Seems boldly bursting on their sight—
The scene of the preceding night,

The secret tale, which might unfold
Truths that he chose to keep untold—
His self-sought morning privacy—
All with reverting glance they see,
And their eyes mark him, plain and clear,
Son—parricide—impostor—Pierre!

One general flash thus instant given,
The crowd, from fear to fury driven,
Fierce—rapid—vehement for the truth,
Catch what, in pauseless warmth of youth,
Zoé sobbed forth—"Within the wood
"Close by my bleeding grandsire stood
"My father, muffled in a cloak—
"He fiercely frowned but nothing spoke—
"High in his hand a dagger's haft
"Dripping with blood—methought he laughed
"A horrid laugh! I saw no more,
"But sunk upon the grassy floor."
Enough—enough—they rush around
And seize him—overpowered and bound,

Dragged, hurried on, a little hour
Saw him in Bergerac's * prison tower,
Fast-fettered in its deepest cell,
Loathed, feared and curst as fiend of hell.
Three days — three nights, low buried there
He lies, while vengeance must prepare
Its tortures, tribunals and proofs ;
And shrill cries shake the prison roofs
'Gainst him, in horrid solitude
Left o'er his coming fate to brood.
No tone falls on his ear to tell
The tread of time — the ponderous bell,
That flings upon the champagne round,
For listening leagues its mighty sound,
So deep in earth his dungeon lies,
Reaches him not — his aching eyes
Strain wide to catch a glimpse of light;
For though its radiance pains the sight,

* Bergerac is situated on the Dordogne about 16 leagues from Bordeaux. It was formerly a place of strength, and was considered the key of the ancient province of Guienne.'

As when the lazy sunbeam crawls
O'er some less hideous prison's walls,
Still blessed light! thy glance of pain
Gilds even the links of slavery's chain.
The splendid mockery comes not here,
All gloomy, desolate and drear.

But leave the captive—turn to her
Who walks abroad in freedom—free!
Oh! does not fancy shuddering stir
To paint such frightful liberty!
Chains are as feathers, bondage nought,
When a pure breast its witness lends,
To light that conscious heaven of thought
Where innocence with suffering blends—
The hardened felon, steeped in sin,
Braves every torturing pang within—
But the racked mind, whose fancies shew
A conscience clogged with guilt below,

In hopeless slavery shackled lies,
More wretched as its virtues rise.
Even so distracted Isabelle,
In one dread moment, shuddering fell
From mortal joy's frail eminence,
To that abyss of woe intense,
Whose dark reflection on her mind
Shewed her, the guiltiest of her kind—
A murderer he! her infant son
A spurious outcast—she undone!
Such were the pangs that wrung her heart,
When, as some deadly-poisoned dart,
The first doubt shot her brain athwart—
Moment of agony! when all,
Like rushing fiends at wizard's call,
Thoughts—fears—surmises swept along,
In one confused, resistless throng—
His dream—his vacant memory
On some slight points of days gone by—

His cheek of blood and eye of flame,
When first she named Pierre's very name,—
These all, as nought while passing, passed,
But now in fearful grouping massed;
While separate, nothing — when combined,
A torrent rushing o'er the mind;
A blaze of light on memory's flood,
That freezes while it fires the blood;
Like some huge, drifting icy isle,
Which chills blue ocean's rolling stream,
While flames, from out the frozen pile,
Tinge the cold wave with lurid gleam.*
The dread these horrid doubts unfold
Might shake a heart of fiercest mould;
Yet she, all gentle, meek and good,
Awhile the torturing shock withstood;

* It sometimes happens that when lofty masses of ice are floating together, the wood that is often drifted along between them is so much chafed, and pressed together with such violence that it takes fire, which circumstance has occasioned fabulous accounts of the ice being in flames.

But 'twas too much—the burst of pain
Ran wild through every high-swoln vein;
Frenzy is burning in her brain,
And fever in her blood.

The hour is come—the court arranged—
The judges' solemn brows unchanged—
The breathless crowd—the gaolers grim,
The guards' attendant trains—
Unheeded, noteless all but him,
The Prisoner—his demeanour such,
So dignified, yet feared so much,
The gazers shun his garment's touch,
And shrinking quake, with speechless pains,
At the very rattling of his chains.
A gathering horror creeps around,
Hushed to dead stillness every sound;
Broke only by the fetters' clanks,—
Or when in hollow echoings rang,
Without, the hammer's heavy twang
That bound the scaffold's jointed planks.

Short was the process— ere began
The opening forms, the sentence ran
Through the indignant throng, so clear
The well-known proofs of guilt appear.
The jet-black hair's blood-stiffened braid
Its mute accusing briefly made—
The prisoner's bore its very shade.—
Again—the murderer's foot-prints laid
Deep in the turf, the form and shape
Exact of his: the quick escape
From the foul scene was deftly done,—
Though ample time was given to run;
Even less might serve, the towers so nigh,
For fear-impelled activity.

But see where trembling Zoé led
Through the full concourse, comes along;
Pale, drooping down her beauteous head,
Like lily withering on its bed;
Unseen by her the weeping throng,

Unheard their loud, spontaneous sigh;
Listless her ear and closed her eye.

The fettered culprit, erewhile dumb,
Marks this last, loveliest witness come;
Heaves one deep groan and wildly strains,
Against his brow, the clanking chains.
"Fate bows me down" he bending cries,
And for a moment closed his eyes.
'Twas but a moment—up he sprung,
Seeming to loathe the plaint thus wrung
From his proud breast—his full eye beams
The soul of suffering dignity—he seems
To rise more grandly from the weight,
Hurled by the heaping hand of fate;
To reach of growing strength the term,
Like arch by pressure fixed more firm.
The awe-struck crowd, each pause between,
Gaze on his majesty of mien,
And marvel that such fiend could bear
The aspect which a God might wear.

Her short, sad tale poor Zoé tells,
Hushed every sound—'tis done! now yells
And threats, from the infuriate crowd,
Deafen the ear in frightful burst;
And rage unfurls its ready shroud
To wrap around the wretch accurst.
Unmoved—unruffled by the shock,
He stands, like some wild and lonely rock
Which frantic waves perpetual lash;
And calm as that horrid tract of sea,
Where thunders crash, and lightnings flash
O'er a sheet of smooth tranquility.*

Amidst the multitude's mad swell
Of vengeance, the dread sentence fell.
When harrowed thought would dare to dwell

* Between the fourth and tenth degrees of north latitude, and between the longitude of Cape Verd, and the easternmost of the Cape Verd Islands, there is a tract of sea condemned to perpetual calms, attended with terrible thunder and lightning, and such rains that this sea has acquired the name of *the Rains*.

Upon the pangs of those, on whom
Falls that dire sound of death and doom,
The blood starts back, a tide of pain,
And runs thick curdling through each vein!

The rack is ready—grimly stand
The savage headsmen, axe in hand,
To strike the fatal stroke of grace
When wearied torture's task may cease.
Out pours the crowd—the gaolers come—
The judges rise—when through the hum
Of bustle loud, a voice is sent,
Crying "Grace! justice! innocent!"
The deep tone pierced the noisy air—
Who spoke the mystery?—St. Clair!
Quick-forcing through the' astounded throng,
He burst with frantic step along;
And soon before the judgment seat
He flings him at the judges' feet—

"Mercy!" with voice convulsed he cries,
While fire darts from his blood-shot eyes;
Hollow his haggard cheek and wan,
Like to that gaunt, mysterious man,
Whose demon warning in the wood
Roused madness through the monarch's blood.*
"Justice for him, and grace for me!
"Hell worked in vain—it could not be
"That truth, like his, should fall beneath
"The stroke of infamy and death—
"Strike off the chains of his disgrace—
"Read, if ye may, his godlike face—
"No murderer he! what nameless power
"Urges me on, in this mad hour,
"To load my once-unsullied name
"With the most darkened shade of shame?
"Fix not thus terribly thine eye
"Much-outraged Philibert! oh! not I
"Dealt the dire blow—there, there he stands
"Who raised his parricidal hands,

* See Note.

" While I, who planned thy father's fall,
" Stood back aloof, as criminal!
" But he struck down in death, alone,
" Thy being's author, and—his own."
Here terror shakes his trembling joints,
While, with unsteady hand, he points
To one, whose more than common height
Towers above the crowd—affsight
Palsies their powers—but, seized at length,
Spite of his huge and vigorous strength,
And stripped of his concealing cloak,
One glance at once the mystery broke—
Speaking the' amazement of their soul,
The crowds' wild-starting eye-balls roll
From him to Philibert—then again,
With stretched intensity of pain,
Through mingled wonder, doubt, and fear,
They turn from Philibert to—Pierre!

Though labouring language strained to pour
The flood of its exhaustless store,
And fancy forced its wildest stretch,
The mute but matchless scene to sketch,
Their boldest flights would nought avail;
Words would fall short, and pencil fail.

Order and form at once o'erturned,
Each breast with one hot impulse burned,
To list St. Clair the plot unfold,
Whose darkest mystery lay untold.
By sob and sigh broke in upon,
His wild, connectless tale went on.—
His primal efforts strove to claim
For him extenuated blame;
With bitter penitence he cast
A futile sorrow on the past,
And one impassioned burst of tears
Flooded the thought of former years.

" Spurred on," he says, " to ruin's brink,
" When mad despair no more can think,
" Philibert came in life and health—
" When, in the very porch of wealth,
" My all of hope, my long-sought meed
" Shrunk like a shade to mock my need—
" My mind so moulded to receive,
" As fact, the hope 'twould fain believe,
" I grasped in joy the thought that shewed
" My rival for yon man of blood.—
" When by his single glance struck down,
" My sturdy heart refused to own
" The light of truth—when justice, even,
" Its all impartial voice had given
" For him, rage only served to blind,
" And racked by turns with shame my mind.
" Dire progeny of these, came on
" Revenge, to hurl me headlong down;

" That dark delight—that sanguined thirst—
" Of all Man's worst desires the worst—
" That fiery river of the soul,
" Whose raging torrents inward roll—
" That nurse of crimes, whose fluttering brood
" Probe her full breast for draughts of blood.
" Yon' miscreant found me in such mood;
" Fresh modelled for his will I stood;
" The ready instrument, for him
" To guide at pleasure, want, or whim—
" Still the last act I dared not do"—

—" Peace babbler, peace! 'tis not for you,
" Cold, shuddering coward! deeds to name
" Whose very mention shakes your frame—
" For me these themes more fit—for me,
" Who never yet my stubborn knee
" Bowed down to man or God—who laughed
" Through life at priesthood's puling craft;

" Me, of whom Fame *shall* say—' he died
" In bold consistency of pride,
" And Earth, Hell, Heaven alike defied,'—
" This be my eulogy alone—
" Deep graven on the kindred stone
" That keeps my flinty bosom down!
" Yes, mine has been a heart of flint,
" Close-girded with an icy belt;
" Where never mercy left its print,
" Nor pity's tear might fall to melt—
" Like adamant to bend or break—
" Which Hecla's fabled bird might seek,
" Whereon to whet his iron beak.*
" Thus nature threw me forth—enough—
" Let my deeds speak for me; their proof
" Tells if I suffered fraudful art
" The natural man's desires to thwart!

* Among the popular superstitions relative to Hecla, was that of its being provided with a guard of black and singular birds of the conformation of the raven, armed with beaks of iron, with which they gave a very unpleasant reception to those who had the temerity to ascend the mountain.

See *the Tour of Olafsen and Povelsen in Iceland.*

" Death waits me now,—but ere I go
" To banquet in the shades below,
" Some hidden truths must come to light—
" Death shall not rob me of my right,
" Nor must the niggard hand of fame
" Stunt the full honors of my name.—
" First know ye then from shame I sprung—
" When round my mother's neck I hung
" I lay upon a wanton's breast,
" Which pillowed, even then, to rest
" Unhallowed lust.—Its offspring I,
" Lascivious sighs my lullaby;
" And grafted in from earliest age,
" Vice, guilt, and crime my heritage.
" To whom was this rare union owing?
" What hand, the bounteous boon bestowing,
" Claimed my warm grasp of gratitude?
" My father's—all to him I owed—
" Was he not richly paid his debt—
" Lives there one claim unsettled yet—

" The stern account was balanced well—
" I sprang from him—by me he fell—
" He gave me—infamy,—despair,—and birth—
" I struck the hoary dog to earth!
" Ere my young lispings could proclaim
" Nature's first word, a father's name,
" Mine had abandoned me to shame—
" He married, and yon' wretch was born,
" Deeper to brand *my* brow with scorn.
" To ruin cast, my mother spurned
" His proferred aid—the wages earned
" Of bold pollution; shame defied,
" And gloried in a harlot's pride.
" Me with a boundless warmth she loved;
" Well was her fatal fondness proved—
" Had humble labour been my lot
" I might—but now it matters not!—
" Learning, accomplishment, and gold
" She lavished on me—bad and bold,

" I knew my shame, and learned to loathe
" The name of sire and brother both.
" She taught me this, and well I wrought
" To con the task her vengeance taught.
" She died—I plunged on my career,
" Known to me every thing but fear—
" Success, my Heaven—my morals, hate—
" My hope, in chance—my faith, in fate.
" *He* came across me in my path—
" High rose the blaze of my red wrath,
" And one damned weakness fanned the ire
" That wreathed me in its fold of fire.—
" But my brain maddens now—I reel
" In the fierce riot of my rage! The steel
" That long had served me, failed to strike
" The deadly blow it used to like—
" He 'scaped me at Nicopolis!
" I rose from thence to all the bliss
" Of eastern indolence—I weighed
" The worth of proferred life, and made
" My choice full soon—a renegade

" From christian forms—I knew no faith—
" Behold me now with straining breath,
" Crescent and cross to me the same,
" Sounding the prophet's holy name!
" Thinking my victim dead, remorse
" Came not on my voluptuous course,
" And luxury, with love combined,
" Blunted that purpose of my mind
" Whose best part lay undone behind.

" Years rolled along—a christian slave
" First to my ear th' intelligence gave
" Of Philibert's safety and return—
" Still, still I feel my bosom burn,
" As when the scathing tidings fell
" Like lightning there—'twas horrible!
" This slave the hard-fought contest told—
" St. Clair's great efforts—conduct bold—
" His wants, defeat, and ruin shewed—
" Soon my resolve was fixed—the road
" That led to France was quickly trode.

" I sought St. Clair; unbosomed all
" My views, my plans—dwelt on his fall
" From fame to misery—all succeeding—
" His rankling mind, still sore and bleeding,
" Fitting him for my purpose well,
" Our plot quick formed, our gains we tell—
" First Philibert alone we doom
" To sink to his untimely tomb;
" But in the old man's death we see
" A better, safer surety.—
" A bright occasion seems to ope
" A vista for our glance of hope—
" My coward partner first I ask
" To strike the blow—he shuns the task,
" Poor drivelling thing! by weakness nursed,
" Who would be villain—if he durst.
" My hand more firm did well for us,
" A double vengeance gaining thus—
" Had Philibert by—Justice died,
" Soon on the stage had I appeared

" As the true heir—the way thus cleared
" The spoils St. Clair and I divide,
" For he had nonght but recognize
" My claims, and share the golden prize.
" When writhing on my sanguined knife
" My gray-haired victim gave his life,
" And yon' young urchin came to pry
" On my short burst of revelry,
" She shrieked out "Father!" fainted—sunk—
" My heart leaped upwards as she shrunk—
" The thirsty weapon longed to plunge
" Deep in her breast! but no, revenge
" Kept back the blow awhile, that she
" His deadliest evidence might be.—
" As I came here, my eyes to glut
" With my foes agonies, no thought,
" Of treachery's snare came o'er me—but
" His triumph has been dearly bought—
" No sire his victor-garland waving—
" His mate in frantic horror raving—

" And blasted Hope's empoisoned dart
" Still fixed and festering in his heart.
" And I have spoken now, that none
" May know me, but for me alone—
" Singly I stood in this wide world;
" Contempt 'gainst all its weakness hurled;
" Hate for its goods I gave—and die
" Its bold and bitter enemy—
" But, had I yet one boon to crave,
" 'Tis vengeance on that traitor slave—
" When fiery anguish burns in me,
" May I his racking torments see!
" And, as my eyes in death grow dim,
" Let torture rouse each quivering limb
" So its next grasp convulses him!"—

The crowd involuntarily thrill,
And form a circle wider still—
When, without instant's time for pause,
Forth from his cloak he quickly draws

A rusted dagger—back they fly,
When, hellish purpose in his eye,
He cries "Mark here the clots of rust
"That hilt and blade alike encrust—
"Mark ye how well, from point to haft,
"The steel its bloody banquet quaffed—
"It served me in my former need,
"But still one caitiff heart must bleed"—
Here, with a bound, he reached St. Clair,—
With strong grasp seized him by the hair,
"Down to Hell's hottest gulph!" scarce said
When deep he plunged the rusted blade—
The poignard feels its fleshy sheath—
The writhing recreant gasps in death—
The blood mounts gurgling to his throat—
And his glazed eyes in crimson float.—

And now the warmly-reeking blade,
High by the desperate murderer swayed,
Straight for his own dire heart falls down—
But no—his race of blood is run!—

The rushing throng's strong arms arrest,
Ere it can reach his ruffian breast,
The well aimed stroke—he dies not so;
Justice must strike the final blow!—
She calls aloud—the rack is near—
He goes—and soon the startled ear
Of the stunned concourse is awoke,
By many a fast-descending stroke
Of neighbouring torture—but no groan
That mortal suffering might own,
No sigh of anguish comes to tell
That on a human form it fell.

But hark! what blissful shouts pour in,
Drowning all sounds with rapturous din?
Who comes along in rapid rush,
With eyes more bright from fevers flush—
O it is *she* whom nought can stay
From this triumphant scene away—
The sudden news has reached her bed—
Pale grief and squalid sickness fled

Before the joyous burst—the crowd
Oppose her not, but shouting loud
Their boisterous bliss, they bear her on—
Who meets her wild embrace? that one
For whom her searching glances call,
Her life—her Philibert—her all!
He flings his still enshackled arms
Close round her quick-reviving charms;
And she the double captive strains,
In folds of love more strong than chains.

THE END.

NOTES TO CANTO FIRST.

Note I.

Full many a mouldering pile's decay,
Since the sixth Charles in France held sway,
P. 14.

The unfortunate reign of Charles the sixth commenced in the year 1380 on the death of his father, and terminated by his own in 1421. A French historian speaks thus of this epoch in the annals of his country.

" Le nom de Charles VI annonce tous les genres de malheurs dont la France pouvoit être accablée. L'histoire devient ici un enchaînement de scènes lugubres, où l'on apprend à détester le vice en gémissant sur les maux de la patrie."

Millot Élém. de l'histoire de France.

Note II.

And countless joust and tournament
Their prowess saw; and oft' they shared
(Prize for who best and boldest dared)
The banquet for their king prepared.—P. 20.

Amongst the many honors of the tournament, showered on the victorious knights, was that of supping

at the table of the King or Prince who presided at the combat, seated at his side and served equally with him. *" Ledit chevalier étoit ce soir-là, et tous les jours ensuite, assis à côté du prince, au plus haut de la table, servi ni plus ni moins que lui, voire vétu de pareille cotte d'armes et manteau, et de lui-méme et de tous les chevaliers d'honneur, il recevoit de beaux dons."*— Hist. de la Chevalerie française. Paris 1814.

In alluding to these combats, of such long and general celebrity, it may not be amiss, and is certainly sufficient, to state that they had their origin in very remote antiquity; that the Germans attribute the bringing them to perfection to their emperor Henry I. in the year 930; but French authors claim this merit for their own country, and the claim seems greatly strengthened by the term *conflictus Gallicos* applied to the tournament by Mathew Paris in the year 1179. They were established in England by Richard I. about the year 1194. Yet notwithstanding the universal passion they excited, and that the strictness of their regulations made them, in the opinion of their eulogists *" comme des nobles assemblées où la vertu étoit, pour ainsi dire, épurée,"* they encountered serious opposition at different periods; and, on several occasions, were forbidden by the popes and the council of the Lateran. But, in spite of these prohibitions, they were cherished, with an ardour that proves the estimation in which they were held during their continuance; however succeeding ages may question, whether the restless and fiery spirit which they fostered in the men, and the ungentle feel-

ings which they must have engendered in their fair spectators, did not more than balance the advantages they brought to nobility of thought and action. On a subject so interesting as the customs of those days of romance, it is amusing to compare the suffrages of opposite writers. The latest,* and perhaps the best, view of the question is that taken by Sismondi in his "*Littérature du Midi;*" but it is not to my present purpose to depreciate the long-imagined worth of chivalry, the enchantments of which, in their relations to poetry, have so lately been revived amongst us, by an uncommon union of genius, taste, and learning.

Note III.

Of him, a vassal—not a slave!—P. 24.

Most of the serfs in France were at this period still in a state of slavery, the policy of the feudal system opposing the advance of liberty, and the edict of enfranchisement, passed by Louis Hutin, in the early part of the fourteenth century, not being much observed. It only offered freedom upon condition of the payment of a certain sum; but the greater number preferred their money to the promised good; perhaps considering that the power which exacted payment for this sacred right, might if it chose infringe the agreement. Advo-

* When this note was written, I had not heard of Mr. Hallam's excellent work on the middle ages.

cates for the feudal system maintain however, that a *Suzeraine* would have blushed to be served by slaves; and that, although they sometimes oppressed their vassals, they never degraded them by dishonoring signs of bondage: on the contrary, that they preserved to them all the appearance of liberty. To prove that it was *but* the appearance which they enjoyed the many vexatious and tyrannical exactions of the seigneurs are on record. Among them are to be found some almost too revolting for repetition: that for instance which was modified to the formality called "*le droit du cuissage.*" The following custom of a noble, who had large possessions in *le Vexin normand* may serve as a specimen of the *amusements* of these suzeraines. He assembled, in the month of June, all his marriageable serfs of both sexes, and, after the nuptial benediction was pronounced, he entertained them with a plenteous repast, at which he himself presided: but he invariably concluded the joyous scene, by imposing on those couples who appeared most amorous some conditions, "*qu'il trouvoit plaisantes.*" For example; to one, to pass their wedding-night on the topmost branches of a tree; to another, to while away a couple of hours in the river Ardelle *en chemise;* to a third, to be harnessed to a plough and trace a few furrows: to a fourth, to jump with their feet tied, over the horns of a stag, &c. &c. But one of his frolics had a more tragical ending than he perhaps expected or desired. He had a niece, between whom and a young man in the neighbourhood there existed a mutual passion. The only

condition on which the uncle would consent to their union, was that the lover should, without reposing, carry his mistress to the top of a hill, which was visible from the windows of the *château*. The youth, animated by love and hope, made light of the command; and, with a bounding heart, bore his beauteous burden to the appointed spot. In an hour, from the accomplishment of the fatiguing task, he died! His mistress in a few days followed him to the grave; and the ridiculous tyrant, who caused this double death, thought to expiate his criminal folly by founding, on the fatal hill (which is within four leagues of Rouen) a religious house to which was given the name of "the priory of the two lovers." * This subject has occasioned the poem of "*La côte des deux amans*" by Mr. Ducis, the French translator of Shakspeare, and the tale is related, I believe, at considerable length, in Mr. Ellis's "Specimens of Metrical Romances."

Note IV.

——————a barbarous age,
Whose records stain th' historic page,—P. 25.

A glance at the history of France will sufficiently justify this passage, as applied to that country. The profound ignorance into which it was plunged is the

* *Essais historiques sur Paris, par* de Saint-Foix. Tome V, p. 157.

more remarkable, as, long before, the arts with their certain associate, refinement, had in a great measure been revived in Italy; * while in France all was intolerance and superstition. Of this the abbé Millot cites a striking instance, in the remonstrance to the Pope, by the university of Paris, which says, with other things, that they ought not to count Greece amongst the parts of Europe, "*parce qu'elle étoit schismatique.*"

Note V.

He viewed the glories of the dead;
And saw the noblest of the land
O'er valour's relics weeping stand,
When royalty's proud tribute paid
Its debt to great Du Guesclin's shade.—P. 26.

Every one is familiar with the name and exploits of Bertrand Du Guesclin, constable of France under Charles V. distinguished by the title of "the flower of chivalry" and one of the most consummate generals, and finest characters of the age. He died on the 13th. July, 1380, in his camp before the town of Castel de Randon, which he had for some time been besieging. His death was consistent with the splendour of his life; pious and firm: and perhaps his best eulogy is the circumstance of his besieged enemies having, during his illness, put

* See Robertson's *Charles V.* Vol. I. p. 94. Roscoe's *Life of Lor. de Med.* Vol. II. chap. IX.

up public prayers for his recovery; and the conduct of the English commandant, when he was no more. This officer had entered into an agreement with his great assailant, that he would give up the place, if in the course of the day of the 12th. July (that which preceded Du Guesclin's death) he did not receive succours, sufficient to cause the raising of the siege. The expected assistance not arriving, the place was summoned to surrender by the marshal de Sancerre, successor of the constable. The commandant replied that he had promised to give up the place to Du Guesclin, and that he would hold to his engagement, in a manner that would evince the honor in which he ever held him, and which he now bore to his memory; that he would have been ashamed to have opened his gates to any but him; that dead as he was, it was only just that he should receive his due; and that the keys of the place should be laid upon the coffin of its vanquisher.

This singular and affecting ceremony actually took place. The English marched out of the town; passed through the hostile camp, the French army ranged in order of battle, and having arrived at the place where the body of Du Guesclin lay, surrounded with all the pomp of death, and the chamber filled with the principal officers of the army, the English commandant and his captains were introduced by marshal de Sancerre. They at first knelt and prayed; when the commandant, rising and standing over the dead body, addressed it as follows. "It is not to this corse, which lies insensible before me, but to you yourself Du

Guesclin, that I surrender my place. Your immortal soul has had alone the power to force me to yield to France, a trust which I swore to my Sovereign to preserve with the last drop of my blood." He then placed the keys at the feet of the body, and retired with his companions, bathed in tears.

The body was embalmed, and interred at S^t^. Denis, by the orders of Charles, with all the magnificence observed at the obsequies of Kings; but the circumstance alluded to in the text was the funeral service at S^t^. Denis, commanded some years afterwards by Charles VI., in honor of Du Guesclin's memory. On this occasion the principal mourners were the famous Olivier de Clisson, then constable of France; the two marshals de Sancerre and de Blainville, and several other nobles of the first rank. The procession was attended by the King, and many Princes of the blood. The ceremony was conducted with every form that could give solemnity to the scene; mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Auxerre, who afterwards delivered a funeral oration, taking for his text: *nominatus est usque ad extrema terræ*, and by an enumeration of the exploits and triumphs of the deceased, proving him to have been indeed the flower of chivalry; and that the title of *preux* only truly belonged to such as he, who had signalised himself equally by virtue and by courage.

I trust I may be excused the length of this note in consideration of its distinguished and celebrated subject, who seemed, by his great actions and noble qualities, to unite every thing estimable in nature or

renowned in chivalry. The particulars of the obsequies are given in *l'Histoire de la Chevalerie française,* which concludes the account with a poetical description of them, in its original orthography; written at the time, and consisting of seventeen stanzas, the first of which will be sufficient to mark the curious simplicity of its style.

Jésus-Christ, qui a grant poissance,
Vueil tous ceulx de mal garder,
Qui du conestable de France,
Monsieur Bertrant, orront chanter.
Oyr porront de l'ordenance,
Comment le roi, qu'on doit amer,
Fist faire, à Saint-Denys en France,
Mémoire du noble guerrier.

Note VI.

To vanquish in the mimic fight,
In Isabelle's inspiring sight—
Sternly to strike the quintin down;
Or fiercely storm some turf-formed town;
To rush, with valour's doughty sway,
Against a Babylon of clay;
A Memphis shake with furious shock,
Or raze some flower-built Antioch!—,
Or when, for friendly conquest bent,
On vespers of the tournament.—P. 27.

The amusements here enumerated were the common occupations of the youths in the age of chivalry. Their education always had war for its main object, and their

boyish feats inspired them with ideas of glory and conquest. In the poem * of "*Saint Louis,*" *liv. I.* by *le père* LEMOYNE is a very animated description of these exercises. One of the most frequent was that of building those rustic imitations of forts, and which (giving to them the names of the different towns of Palestine) they attacked, stormed, and escaladed with all the forms of war. If the gothic window of a pavilion or saloon opened upon the field of mimic fight, the ladies of the court sat there to view the exercise. The youthful squires, having served this apprenticeship to chivalry, anxious to acquire the experience necessary for their admission to the honor of knighthood, continually practised in mock combats. The evening preceding a tournament was passed in a species of joust called "vespers of the tournament" where the ardent candidates exercised with arms of a lighter, and more portable kind, than those used in the lists; easier to break, and less dangerous. These spectacles were at all times witnessed by the ladies, whose sensibility, in the earlier days, did not permit them to frequent the tournaments; but "*l'horreur de voir répandre le sang céda, enfin, dans le cœur de ce sexe, né sensible, à l'inclination encore plus naturelle, et plus puissante, qui les porte vers tout ce qui appartient au sentiment de la gloire.*"—LA CURNE DE STE.-PALAYE *Mém. sur l'anc. Ch.* Part. I. p. 30.

* It was of this extraordinary combination of beauties and absurdities that Boileau said. "*Il y a trop de belles choses pour le critiquer, et trop de mauvaises pour le louer.*"

Note VII.

They waived his yet imperfect age;
And, love and valour in his breast,
By chivalry's most solemn rite
The good Count Philip dubbed him knight, &c.
P. 27, 28.

To be admitted to the honor of the *accolade* it was considered necessary to have attained the age of twenty one years; but this rule was frequently infringed: Sovereigns, and Princes of the blood claimed exemption by the privilege of birth, and it was sometimes accorded to other youths of distinguished merit. Charles VI. was made chevalier, at the time of his baptism, by Bertrand Du Guesclin; and at his coronation he himself conferred the same honor on four of his cousins, children at the time; as well as on several youthful squires sons of the nobility.* The solemnity of the ceremony is well understood: the details have been particularly given by numerous writers. Most lately in a work to which I shall have frequent occasion to refer, *la Gaule poétique*, by M^r. De Marchangy. Among other forms was the presenting the scarf, which was generally the gift, as well as the work, of the chevalier's mistress. In the manuscript preserved in the Royal Library at Paris, written by the hand of René, King of Sicily,** are all the forms and regulations of

* De la Roque, *Traité de la noblesse.*

** The chivalrous monarch, who received the news of the taking

the "*Tournoi à Plaisance.*" The prizes are particularly mentioned.

Le premier, une verge d'or à celui qui fera le plus beau coup de lance de tout ce jour-là.

Le second, un rubis de mille écus ou au-dessous, à celui qui rompra le plus de lances.

Et le troisième, un diamant de mille écus ou au-dessous, à celui qui restera plus longuement sur les rangs sans déshaumer.

Note VIII.

When Bourbon, joined to Genoa's force,
With the bravest peers of France took horse
To strike the corsair down—P. 29.

In the year 1388 that distinguished ornament of his country, the Duke of Bourbon, uncle to the King, seizing the first pretext to absent himself with honor from a court which he despised, accepted the command of the expedition sent to the succour of the republic of Genoa, against the African corsairs. This expedition brought but a return of sterile glory to France, and to her warriors a new accession of fame. Having performed prodigies of valour, the King of Tunis, intimi-

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of Naples while he was occupied in designing a partridge for some heraldic purpose, and, with the perfect coolness of philosophy, continued his work; only representing the bird with its wings expanded, as an emblem of the instability of fortune!

dated by their heroic actions, hastily concluded a treaty which opened an honorable road for their retreat; and the French army, with their allies the English, were not slow in retiring from a climate which had committed nearly as much havoc as their bloody encounters with the enemy.

Note IX.

When the young knight waved in victory
The royal, white-cross standard high,
Rivaling de Bacqueville, glorious name,
Last bearer of the Oriflame.—P. 29.

The armies of France had in all times a royal standard. Its colour was frequently changed; nor did it constantly bear the same ornaments or devices. Under the first and second race of the Kings the national ensign was the blue banner of S^t^. Martin; however, in the reign of Charles VI. and long before it bore the *croix blanche*. This royal pennon was sometimes carried with armies where the King was not in person, as in this expedition, where Froissart expressly mentions it to have been borne.

Among the ancient French standards the *oriflamme* was the most celebrated. It was a banner like those carried in religious processions; made of plain red taffeta and fastened to a gilded and red coloured lance, from which, or that of the banner itself, the name of *oriflamme* is apparently derived. As to the antiquity

of its origin the old writers differ; some affirming it (like the lily in the arms of France) to have been a gift from heaven to the ancient Kings. Some attribute its first use to Dagobert; others have called it the standard of Charlemagne; and it has been confounded with the royal standard; but the *oriflamme* was originally the standard of the Abbey of Saint Denis, not to be carried in religious processions, but borne in battle, in the petty wars which the abbey was sometimes forced to wage against the nobles invading its rights. There is no mention made of the *oriflamme* in the French armies before the time of Louis *le gros*, and its origin may perhaps be fixed in his reign. It was always borne in battle by a man of quality, and conspicuous valour: the last named by the ancient historians to have had this honor is Guillaume Martel, seigneur de Bacqueville, mentioned by Froissart as one of the chevaliers of the Kings chamber, under Charles VI.; but since the latter end of his reign, when the English made themselves masters of Paris, there is no further mention made of the *oriflamme* in the histories, though it has been spoken of as used subsequently, in the reigns of Charles VII. and Louis XI. Further particulars of this famous banner, and an examination of the claims of the house of Harcourt to its possession, are to be found in *l'Histoire de la Chevalerie française*.

Note X.

And need no loose, voluptuous court
To regulate their round of love—P. 36.

In the reign of Charles VI., and under the particular patronage of the Queen Isabeau was instituted *la Cour amoureuse* a degenerate revival of the ancient *Cours d'amour;* * formed on the model of the sovereign Courts, with all the distinctions of President, Counsellors, Masters of requests, &c. The greatest of the nobility solicited the honor of being admitted, and the Princes of the blood were at the head of this confederacy entirely consecrated to love. In the list of the officers were seen the names of the most ancient families of the kingdom, and even the Doctors of theology, grand vicars, canons, chaplains and curates of Paris, and several other towns, were not ashamed of joining themselves to this voluptuous association, condemned by all the historians, and designated by one of them an "*assemblage monstrueux, et qui caractérise la dépravation d'un siècle grossier, où l'on ignoroit l'art si facile d'être vicieux, du moins avec décence.*"

VILLARET Hist. de France, T. XII. p. 98.

* For a fanciful and interesting detail of the proceedings of these extraordinary tribunals,—See *la Gaule poétique,* T. VII. p. 55.

Note XI.

On thy mild bosom, clear Dordogne!—P. 37.

The river Dordogne takes its rise in the mountains of Auvergne; descending from whence it flows through the Perigord; and watering the fertile and beautiful plains of Bergerac and S^te^.-Foi, it encreases in width as it pursues its winding course, by Castillon and Libourne. At Bourg, four leagues below Bordeaux, it joins the Garonne; and thence the united streams under the name of the Gironde roll onwards to the sea. The Dordogne is a lovely stream. The poem which the author has thus ventured before the public, was chiefly written on its banks, and he may perhaps be permitted here to claim (without incurring the censure of a common-place excuse) some indulgence for a production, composed at so remote a distance from the literary advice, that in England might have lessened its imperfections.

NOTES TO CANTO SECOND.

Note I.

Quick from the breathless courier's hand
He snatched the brief, but firm command;
" Count Philibert! prepare thy band"—P. 46.

The familiar style of this royal summons, I am not able to justify by any precedent. I chose it, as better suited to poetry than the more formal language of the *Mandements*, usually issued to the seigneurs by the Kings. Of these the following may serve as a specimen. It was one of those addressed, by King John to the nobles, on the breaking out of the war with England in 1356. Several similar letters were sent out by the same King in 1353, and by Charles V. in 1369.

Extrait du troisième Registre des mémoriaux de la Chambre des comptes, coté C. fol. 144.

DE PAR LE ROY.

Sire de Seuly. Savoir vous faisons que les trieves que nous avions vers le Roy d'Angleterre & ses aliez faudront à la quinzaine de ces prochaines Pasques, &

parmy ce que l'on nous a rapporté ne pais ne trieves ne seront, mais sommes certains que les Anglois ont voulenté & propos de porter dommage à nous & à nos subgiez & à nostre royaume le plustot qu'ils pourront. Pourquoi nous, par deliberation de nostre Conseil, avons ordoné à faire nostre Mandement hastivement à Compiegne à ladite quinzaine de Pasques de genz d'armes & de pié. Si vous requerons & mandons estroitement que sur la foy & loyauté que vous nous devez & sur l'amour que vous avez à nous, vous soiez en armes & en chevaux le mieux accompagné de bonnes gens d'armes que vous pourrez à Compiegne à ladite quinzaine de Pasques toutes excusations cessanz, & toutes autres choses arrière mises, & de ce nous failliez par quelque cause si chier comme vous avez nostre honneur & nostre amour, quar se vous en failliez ce pourroit porter trop grand honte & dommage à nous & à nostre Royaume. Et vous trouverez audit lieu qui vous sera prest pour vous & pour vostre compagnie. Donné à Paris le 1[5] jour d'avril.

For several examples of these *mandements*.—See De la Roque, *Traité du ban et arrière-ban*, p. 112.

Note II.

Thy friend—I Charles the King.—P. 47.

I have to acknowledge an anachronism, in representing the fealty of a noble of Guienne as due to the French Monarch at this period of the story. The pro-

vince remained in possession of the English for some time afterwards. It was reconquered in the year 1451, and Bordeaux taken by the French, under the command of the celebrated Dunois bastard of Orléans. This event is fully detailed in "*l'Histoire curieuse et remarquable de la ville et province de Bordeaux.*" A revolt two years afterwards disturbed the tranquility of the Conquerors, but the battle of Castillon decided the French possession, which has since continued uninterrupted.

Of Charles VI. to whom some allusions are made in the text, it is only necessary to remind the reader that before his unfortunate insanity (for an account of which see Note to the sixth Canto) he was a Prince of the most distinguished promise; chivalric to a romantic excess; and among the extravagancies of this feeling, little was wanting to make him renew the project of the crusades. The hopes of the nation from this King were woefully deceived, and in the words of the old work just quoted "*il devint dans la suite incapable en toutes manieres de gouverner son royaume, alors les affaires changerent en France du blanc au noir.*"

Hist. cur. et remarq. de la ville et province de Bordeaux, T. I. p. 325.

Note III.

"*Courage, my liege, I come!*"—P. 47.

For this laconic reply, as well as the King's letter, I am without any immediate example. M^r. de Mar-

changy seems however to think that a free, and even unceremonious style was adopted by the seigneurs to their sovereign; * and in support of this opinion, cites the letters of Guy de Dampierre to Philip Augustus, as reported by Martenne. I have consulted these letters, which, being written in Latin, do not appear to me at all deficient in form. They conclude, it is true, by the simple announcement of the date, but this is in conformity to the usage of that language, all titles and phrases of respect being placed in the commencement. One of these letters runs thus. "*Carissimo domino suo Philippo Dei gratia illustri Francorum regi Guido de Dampetra, salutem. Noverit serenitas vestra, &c. &c. Actum anno Domini* MCCXIII. *ipso die S. Thomæ apostoli.*"—MARTENNE. *Vet. script.* Tomus I. p. 1113.

Note IV.

These the choice band who proudly share
The task, the Banneret's pennon square,
The standard of their lord to bear;
— — — — — — — —
As erst was stamped, with fiery glow,
By Charny bold, or Boucicaut,
Whose daring held such high emprize
As dizzied valour's wondering eyes.—P. 52.

The different gradations of chivalry had their distinct

* *La Gaule poétique*, Tome IV, p. 253, 254.

banners. Those of the knights bannerets were square, to distinguish them from the forked pennon of the chevaliers bachelors, or knights of the second order; which however was also sometimes borne by the squires, by reason of some peculiar privilege, such perhaps as gave some the right to wear the haubert, or coat of mail (which they did in virtue of a species of fief called "*fief de haubert*") though it properly belonged to the chevaliers. The banner of a knight Banneret was always under the guard of a particular, chosen band: those of my hero I have compared in point of bravery to two remarkable names in French chivalry. The seigneur of Charny was particularly signalized at the *pas d'armes*, held at a place called *le charme de Marcenay* near Dijon, by him and twelve other gentlemen of the house of Burgundy, of whom he was the chief, and in this quality had the honor of paying all the expence.

Boucicaut with his two friends de Saimpy and Renaud de Roye, all of small stature but redoubted courage, in the reign of Charles VI., had proclaimed by sound of trumpet, throughout Christendom, that, for the honor of French chivalry, they challenged all comers to combat of the sword or lance. The place of combat was S^t. Ydenard, between Calais and Boulogne. Crowds of spectators, and knights champions from all countries, assembled on this spot, where for three days they were sumptuously entertained by the challengers, who, for several days following having sustained the attacks of forty opponents, were finally proclaimed victors, and crowned with admiration and applause.

These emprises in all their barbarous celebrity were very common in France, and there is one recorded to have been held at Edinburgh in the year 1507 by the *Chevalier sauvage à la dame noire* and his two friends; which lasted five weeks, during which time they fought against all comers for love of the ladies, generally, and that of their gloomy mistress in particular.

See OLIVIER DE LA MARCHE *Mém., liv. I. chap.* 9.

Note V.

Night of intense and sudden woe,
That comes a deadlier gloom to throw,
Than when Pompeii's buried bower
In one black ruin happier fell,
For mercy winged the sable shower
And none survived their pangs to tell,—P. 55.

The loss of life at the destruction of Pompeii bore but a small proportion to the nature of the calamity, if the discovery of skeletons may be taken as a positive test. I believe that none have been found, except a few under the ruins of a theatre, and twenty nine (I state from memory) in a house outside the gate leading to Rome, from the appearance of which it would seem, that the entire family were caught in the desolating shower, and destroyed in various attempts at escape.

NOTES TO CANTO THIRD.

Note I.

Soldiers' Song.—P. 75.

This song may be considered an imitation of the following, said to be written by the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, on her quitting France after the death of her first husband, Francis II., on board the vessel which bore her to Scotland, and while the French coast receded from her view.

Adieu, plaisant pays de France,
O ma patrie
La plus chérie,
Qui as nourri ma jeune enfance!
Adieu, France! adieu, mes beaux jours!
La nef qui déjoint mes amours
N'a cy de moi que la moitié;
Une parte te reste; elle est tienne;
Je la fie à ton amitié
Pour que de l'autre il te souvienne.

The reader will possibly be pleased with a translation of this interesting little production, transcribed from an anonymous hand.

Ah! pleasant land of France farewell!
My country dear
Where many a year
Of infant youth I loved to dwell.
Farewel for ever, happy days!
The ship which parts our love conveys
But half of me; one half behind
I leave with thee, dear France, to prove
A token of our endless love
And bring the other to thy mind.

Note II.

And the rattling drum,
With deafening hum,
Calls, on proud Danube's trembling banks,
The' Hungarian host to quick-formed ranks,
P. 76.

This memorable expedition which ended in the defeat of the christians near Nicopolis in 1396, filled all France with mourning for the loss of her bravest warriors, and the flower of her noblesse. Bajazet I., surnamed *Ilderim*, the thunderbolt, a Prince full of courage, genius, and ambition, filled at that time the Ottoman throne. The prodigious rapidity of his movements, and his great success, made him an object of general terror. Sigismond, King of Hungary, affrighted at the progress of this terrible conqueror, implored the aid of several christian Princes. The King of France most readily complied with the demand for succour, and the expedition in question was the second despatched

for that purpose. John Count de Nevers, son of the Duke of Burgundy at the age of twenty two years, was appointed chief of the enterprize, and extraordinary taxes were levied for its support. It consisted of ten thousand men at arms, more than a thousand chevaliers, and a number of squires not less considerable. They joined the grand army, one hundred thousand strong, at Buda, having crossed a part of Germany, and carrying in their train all the trappings of debauchery and pride. Intoxicated with presumption, they thought they were marching to certain victory, against barbarians without courage or discipline; and Bajazet not appearing, as they had expected he would, they attributed his tardiness to fear: but the King of Hungary, who knew well the kind of enemy he had to contend with, repressed their boasting. The christians passed the Danube with barks and pontoons. They opened the campaign by the taking of some places which were carried by assault, and invested the strongly fortified town of Nicopolis. The garrison opposed the most vigorous resistance, and the Ottoman Emperor at length came to their succour, at the head of an army of two hundred thousand men: but the christians held this superiority in contempt, and after their having gained some slight advantages over the enemy, the final battle at length drew near. The different transactions of this bloody day were such as sketched in the Poem. The French army was literally annihilated. The greater part perished sword in hand. The remnant, reduced to about 300, were taken, despoiled and loaded with chains;

and afterwards (with the exception of a few of the chiefs*) butchered in revenge for some similar acts of cruelty. About 300 more, who had gone out to forage before the battle, had the good fortune to escape, and after incredible hardships arrived in France to spread the melancholy news. It was at first totally discredited; and the fugitives were obliged to be secured from the populace, enraged at the disgraceful report, until the fatal confirmation was received, to change their angry presumption into the most profound and humiliating grief.—See Villaret *Hist. de France*, T. XII.

Note III.

What time bold Clisson took the field
War against Bretagne's Duke to wield.—P. 79.

The war between the Duke of Brittany and the constable Oliver Clisson, which lasted for so many years, and which the mediation of the greatest Princes, the authority of the King, and even the interest of the contending parties had not power to extinguish, was terminated by a trait of generosity. The Duke begin-

* These nobles, who were spared for the sake of ransom, were, it would appear, treated with not only indulgence, but magnificence by Bajazet. At one hunting party which he gave them there were no less than 7000 falconers and as many huntsmen.—La Curne de Sainte-Palaye, *Mém. sur la Chasse*, 2°. part., p. 248, t. 3 *des Mém. sur l'ancienne Chevalerie*.

ning to feel the weight of age, and harrassed by this long continued contest, gave up the hope of subduing the enemy by force of arms. Following merely the counsel of his heart, he wrote to Clisson in the most affecting terms, inviting him to put an end to their divisions, and not forgetting to recal to him their ancient friendship. He solicited a meeting from him, to regulate, without the interference of others, the clauses of their reconciliation. Clisson, though surprized and touched by this overture, hesitated awhile; and resolved to put the Duke's sincerity to the proof. He demanded his eldest son as a hostage. This was readily complied with: two Lords arrived with the precious deposit, and the powerful vassal would no longer contest with his noble adversary except in frankness and generosity: He followed the deputies to Vannes, and meeting the Duke, presented to him his son. The Prince, on his part, was astonished at this unexpected confidence. He and Clisson gazed at each other some moments without speaking; when, by a sudden movement, they were mutually impelled to throw themselves into each others arms. The particulars of this interesting interview are related in volume XII. of Villaret's history of France.

Note IV.

His merit form's cold march defied,—
Ardent it met rank's coming stride,
And gave nobility new pride.—P. 79.

Nobility was in those days a dignity of no very dif-

ficult attainment; the power of granting it not being confined to the Monarch, but occasionally enjoyed by his Lieutenants-general and Governors of provinces, and others. Several noble houses also claimed and exercised this important privilege, within their sovereignties, independant of the confirmation of the King; but this right was sometimes questioned, and the act of nobility annulled; as in the case of two brothers, who were ennobled by Robert III. Count of Flanders, and Guy, Count of Nevers, his son, but stripped of their honors by Philip the hardy, as appears by the *arrêt* of the Parliament, of Pentecost 1281, in these terms: *" Non obstante usu contrario ex parte Comitis Flandrensis proposito, dictum & pronunciatum fuit contra dictum Comitem, quod non poterat nec debebat facere de villano militem, sine auctoritate Regis. Et hoc fuit dictum pro filiis Philippi de Borbonio*."

This usurped, or at least highly abused, privilege was at length carried to so ridiculous an excess, as to call down the tardy prohibition of the crown, as appears by the following *ordonnance* of Louis XII. in the year 1498. *" Combien qu'à nous seul & à nos successeurs Rois de France appartienne de donner Graces, Pardons & Rémissions, & avec ce, nous ayons plusieurs droits singuliers & priviléges qui sont à nous & à nos successeurs Rois de France réservez, en signe de souveraineté; néanmoins, aucuns nos Lieutenants & Gou-*

* The father was called Philip *de Bourbon* from the place of his nativity.

verneurs, & aussi leurs Lieutenants par nous établis en plusieurs contrées, ont entrepris & s'efforcent sous couleur d'aucun pouvoir qu'ils disent avoir obtenu de nous ou de nos Prédécesseurs, donner des Graces, Rémissions & Pardons, Foires, Marchez, Annoblissemens & Légitimations, & connoître des matiéres tant civiles que criminelles partie à partie, sans appel ne ressort; & avec ce évoquent les causes qui sont pendantes pardevant nos juges ordinaires, en perturbant les jurisdictions ordinaires de nôtre païs de Normandie; pour ces causes, avons révoqué & révoquons, par Édit perpétuel & irrévocable, leurdit pouvoir & puissance quant à ce, en leur faisant inhibitions & défenses que dorénavant ils ne donnent Graces, Rémissions & Pardons, Foires, Marchez, Annoblissemens & Légitimations, & qu'ils n'évoquent les causes pendantes par-devant les juges ordinaires, ne d'icelles connoissent en quelque maniére que ce soit, &c."

On these subjects see De la Roque, *Traité de la noblesse*, p. 124 & 130.

Note V.

And springs at once to fame secure,
An all-accomplished Troubadour.—P. 82.

It is not my intention to intrude upon the reader here a lengthened detail of the history of the Troubadours, so amply treated by many writers, particularly of late years by Guinguené and Sismondi, and more re-

cently still by M^r. De Marchangy. To illustrate some passages in the text I may be allowed to state that this celebrated order, though far in its decline, had not at the period of my story entirely ceased to exist. The occupation that it presented was highly agreeable; travelling continually from Castle to Castle; always well received; loaded with presents, and offering every opportunity of becoming distinguished and rich. Considerable privileges were granted to those who excelled in song, particularly by the fair sex; who sometimes crowned them with plumes of feathers. A kiss was often the reward of the most successful; flowers of gold and silver were the prizes occasionally distributed at the floral games, held in the college of poetry established at Toulouse; but still more substantial benefits accrued to the highly favoured professors of the *gaie science*: There were instances of their receiving the honor of knighthood, and arriving to extraordinary preferments; besides frequently being loaded by Princes, and other distinguished patrons, with gifts of great value.

The history of the Troubadours, (as is justly observed by the last of the authors above quoted,) is the only period in the annals of France on which the mind can repose, from the recital of politics, battles and revolutions. Still their claims to that unbounded admiration which they excited, and which their name yet recalls, are not to be found in their fugitive and trifling compositions. It is that feeling of reality which they bring home to the mind, that constitutes their greatest charm. Other poets, seldom painting their own sentiments or

affections, exhibit but the weaker inspiration of fictitious suffering, and we give to the poem that share of sympathy which in the case of the Troubadour we feel due to the man. Their tears do not flow to wet the chords of their lyre; and their imaginary pictures are tinged with fictitious colours. The Troubadours on the contrary were almost always the actors in their little recitals. They admit us to their secrets, and their romantic projects; they make us witness of their wildness, their delirium, their follies; we partake in their hopes, their fears and their enjoyments; and if the poet fails to charm us by his verses we are at least interested for the passion of the lover.

The following couplets, translated from the provençal by M^r. de Marchangy, are part of one of the sixty six songs of Thibaud, King of Navarre, which have been edited by La Ravallière. The reader, unacquainted with the old language, will probably enjoy, with me, this specimen of several spirited and elegant translations.

Au foyer que le ciel allume,
Le Phénix se plaît à mourir;
Comme lui, mon cœur se consume
Près de l'objet de son désir.
L'immortel oiseau de l'Aurore
Ne meurt que pour se ranimer;
Ainsi du feu qui me dévore
Je veux renaître pour aimer.

Riches trousseaux, orfévrerie,
Beaux manoirs et vassaux nombreux,
De l'or autant qu'en abbaye,
J'ai tout, et ne suis point heureux.

Le chaste objet de ma constance
A mes désirs n'a point souri;
Moins vaut être sire de France,
Qu'être amant pauvre, mais chéri.

Note VI.

Unlike the madly fond Rudel,
Who in hot raptures lifeless fell;
Or Cabestan, in heedless hour
Victim to savage Raymond's power.—P. 84.

The excess to which the Troubadours carried the passion of love, as well as its danger, is well exemplified by the fate of these two celebrated personages. Geoffroi Rudel became desperately enamoured of Melinsende a Countess of Tripoli, from the reports of some pilgrims, although he had never seen her. The violence of his affection was such that nothing could satisfy it but a sight of his unknown enchantress. He embarked on board a vessel which was bound to the East, and employed himself, during his voyage, in composing to her praise verses, (which however he was not destined to recite to her), where he compared his passion for her to his adoration for the divinity whom his heart adored although unseen. At the ravishing melody of his verses mixed with sighs, the delighted sailors forgot, in listening, their signals and their oars; and the silver-scaled dolphins followed the line of light, traced by the sun or the stars behind the ship. But in the anxious ten-

derness of the too susceptible Rudel, a burning fever inflamed the fire of his unruly passion. Without nourishment, or repose; feeding his soul with chimerical illusions; he consumed and wasted away. Already his voice began to fail; but the name of Melinsende was continually hovering on his discoloured lips. The ideal image, which his mind had figured, concealed from him, as if by enchantment, his danger and even the extent of the evil which devoured him. The ship arrives, but Rudel has only an instant to live! The friend who accompanies him flies to the palace of Melinsende; and informs her of the passion, the voyage, and the peril of Rudel. The astonished Princess, penetrated by this example of tenderness and devotion, feels hurried by an irresistable impulse to the beach. She supports in her arms the expiring Troubadour, who fixes on her his languid but voluptuous looks. He sees her more beautiful than his wildest dreams had imagined. "It is you then!" he faintly exclaims—He sighs, and kisses her and—his eyes are closed for ever!

It is said that at this instant a chord of his lyre broke, and that a dying murmur swept through the sycamores of the oriental shore. The inconsolable Melinsende quitted her father's court, and in a monastery, near to which she erected a superb mausoleum to the memory of her lover, she consecrated the remainder of her days to tears and to regret.—MILLOT, *Hist. littér. des Troub.* T. I. p. 85, &c. *La Gaule poétique*, T. VII. p. 72, &c.

Guillaume de Cabestaing was page to Raimond de Castel Roussillon, husband of the lovely Marguerite.

She could not see without emotion the young and handsome page. One day being alone with him in a grove, she said: William, answer me; if a Lady gave thee a token of her love wouldst thou dare to love her?—Yes, certainly; if the token were not deceitful.—If it were a look?—I should be afraid.—If it were a tender smile?—I should doubt.—If she pressed your hand in hers?—I should then hope.—And if, passing an arm around you, she supported herself against your heart; if her mouth dared!—She left the sentence unfinished but action supplied the place of words: a kiss imprinted on the forehead of the happy youth rendered him nearly wild—He threw himself at her feet; laughed; cried; talked wildly; and from thence forth could not live an instant from her sight. The husband being, by some means, informed of the intrigue, demanded from Cabestaing, sword in hand, one day at the chace, for what lady he composed his verses. The Troubadour, seeing that he was suspected, answered that it was for Madame Agnès, sister of Marguerite, and wife of Robert of Tarascon. Raimond, satisfied by this apparently candid avowal, thought no more of killing his page, but only saw in the affair matter of amusement, and contrived for Cabestaing occasions to see his pretended mistress. They repaired together to the *château* of Tarascon, when Raimond, fully to assure himself, demanded an interview with Agnès, who was the confidant of her sister. She perceived something in the manner of Raimond more than common curiosity, and to turn aside his distrust she avowed that she loved the

page. She made the latter acquainted with her stratagem, and the better to deceive the husband they affected to speak mysteriously, to interchange significant looks, &c. But a consequence little apprehended ensued from this deceit. Marguerite herself became its dupe; and being of a temper as jealous as it was amorous, saw, in these signs of intelligence and apparent affection, the treachery of her lover and her friend. The storm burst in reproaches upon Cabestaing, who in vain attempted to undeceive her. She would consent to pardon him only on condition of his addressing some verses to her, declaring that it was really her and not Agnès that he loved. The ready Troubadour, glad of a new occasion to express his passion, composed a gallant song, which by some unlucky chance came to the sight of Raimond. He, furious at the double affront which injured his honor, and imposed on his credulity, encountered Cabestaing; killed him on the spot; and, with savage brutality, tore out his heart, and had it dressed and served up to his wife. This infernal action was accompanied by the relation of what he had done. When Marguerite recovered from the swoon which followed, she started up, exclaiming that what she had eaten was so delicious, that she was resolved never to lose the taste of it, by touching other food.—Then, in her delirium, she rushed to a balcony, from whence she precipitated herself, and met with instant death.*

The only recompense to the reader of this brutal

* Millot, Tome I. *La Gaule poétique*, Tome 7.

transaction, is the knowledge of its punishment. The cruelty of Raimond appeared so horrible, that Alphonso, King of Arragon, razed his Castle to the ground, and threw him into prison, where we may hope his suffering in some measure expiated his atrocity. Alphonso also caused the lovers to be interred in one grave near the church of Perpignan, and their dreadful story to be engraven on their tomb. Boccaccio has given this tale, with some variation and less interest. He seems to have related it from memory, as the names are different, and he makes Cabestaing a noble, and neighbour, instead of page, to his murderer.—Decameron, *Gior. 4. Nov. IX.*

Note VII.

" Woe! woe, great chiefs," the trembler cried,
" To Christian hopes, and Europe's pride!
" Fly the foul land that magic blinds,
" Where demons walk the viewless winds—
— — — — — — — —
" Marshalled as earth-born champions' ranks,
" The troop comes on—and he, bold Pierre,
" Who stands a living mortal here,
" By hellish glamour changed and screened,
" Stalks at their head—a fleshless fiend!"—P. 88.

To justify my having put this rhapsody of terror into the mouth of the cowardly captain, may be scarcely necessary to the reader who considers the gross superstition of the times; when every event beyond

the immediate conception of the vulgar was attributed to the agency of magic. No proofs are requisite as to the ignorant belief to this day in the apparitions of living persons; but the following grave relation establishes, that a couple of centuries later than the period above mentioned, the notion still existed of demons having the power to assume the shapes of men.

"In 1609 a gentleman of Silesia having invited some friends to dinner, saw the hour arrive without their appearing. He was highly enraged, and exclaimed: "Since these men will not condescend to appear, may all the devils come in their stead!" He then left his house, and went to the church where the curate was preaching. Whilst he listened to the sermon, the court yard of his house was filled with cavaliers, all black and of high stature, who desired a servant to go and tell his master that the guests had arrived. The man affrighted, ran to the church and delivered his message. The master, not less astonished, asked advice of the curate; returned home, and made all his family quit the house; but in their hurry they forgot an infant sleeping in its cradle. The guests, or rather the devils, (for so in fact they turned out to be) immediately commenced to toss about the furniture, to howl, to look out of the windows under the form of bears, wolves, cats, and terrific looking men, &c.—while the neighbours, the gentleman, and the curate contemplated this frightful spectacle, the poor father cried out piteously for his child. One of the devils instantly brought it to the window, and shewed it to the spectators."—This

being I hope sufficient to convince the reader of the possibility of these transformations, I shall refer the curious, for the rest of this interesting adventure, to Tom. I. p. 178 of *le Dictionnaire infernal* published at Paris 1818.

Note VIII.

Brothers in arms, together joined,—P. 95.

Fraternity of arms was one of the most solemn engagements that could bind men together in the ties of fidelity and friendship. It was an alliance between two or more chevaliers engaged in some particular enterprize; by which they pledged themselves to the strictest union of defence against their mutual enemies. The usage is very ancient; and to render the alliance more solemn the parties sometimes caused themselves to be let blood, which they mixed with their wine, and drank together, pledging to their fraternity, and saying that they thus became brothers of one blood. There were not perhaps many instances of this excess of barbarity, but religious rites were almost always called in to the aid of these engagements;—They were contracted in the face of the altars, the solemnity of the mass witnessing their sincerity; a consequence which was not however at all times lasting, as in the case of the Duke of Orleans and Jean *sans peur,* who, a short time before the murder of the former, had together taken the sacrament of the Lord's supper, swearing good faith and fraternity together.

NOTES TO CANTO FOURTH.

Note I.

As Bertha from her Robert torn.—P. 115.

Robert, son of Hugues Capet, succeeded his father to the throne of France in the year 997. Nature had exhausted her powers in the formation of this unhappy Prince, who was a model of personal beauty, talents, wisdom and virtue. At the time of his coronation he was hardly twenty years of age, and an object of admiration to all the Princesses of the surrounding countries: but he had long loved the beauteous Bertha, daughter of Conrad, King of Burgundy. They had known each other from childhood; they had been presented at the same time at the baptismal font, and were even distantly related. This early connection, which appeared so propitious to the lovers, was however a double obstacle to their union; it being prohibited between relations even to the seventh degree, as well as to such as had contracted a spiritual alliance by being held together at the font. Robert convoked the bishops of his kingdom, who found no difficulty in overcoming their religious scruples, when they stood in the way of political advantage. The lovers were united; but hardly was the marriage concluded, when the sovereign Pontiff,

irritated at the presumption of Robert, and the interference of the Gallican church, ordered him instantly to separate from his youthful consort; and that both should perform a penance of seven years duration. Robert had, by his exemplary conduct, his frequent pilgrimages, his efforts for the suppression of heresies, the composition of hymns in honor of the church, and his munificent endowment of upwards of twenty religious edifices, obtained the appellation of the most pious of Kings. But he loved, and was beloved! and though the darkness of the times left him no doubt that his disobedience was warring against God, and that it opened for him the abyss of Hell; he hesitated not a moment to brave the injunction of Rome. The indignant Pontiff commanded a second time the divorce; and the accompanying anathema, in case of further disobedience, has been preserved. The following is a translation of this piece of horrible eloquence.—"That he be cursed "alike in town and country; that curses rest on him, "his children, his flocks and his domains; that no "christian shall call him brother nor give him the sa-"lutation of peace; that no priest shall blend his name "in prayer, nor admit him to the altar of divine grace. "That friendship, consolation and hope fly from his "death bed; that no beloved hand shall close his eyes; "but that his entrails, like those of the impious Arius, "shall discharge themselves from his half open bosom; "that his corse be exposed without rite of sepulture "on the affrighted shore; that the winds of the desert "shall whiten his bones, while no pilgrim dares to

" throw a little earth on his wretched remains; that " his name be a horror to future times; or rather that " his memory be lost among men, and that the blessed " dawn of a future life shall never brighten his shade." Robert heard the frightful anathema, looked upon his wife, and refused to obey! 'Twas then that their miseries commenced; for then submission to the unrelenting tyranny of Rome was at its height. Preached against in all quarters by his bishops; deserted by his ministers, his courtiers, his favourites, the officers of his household; shunned like a pestilence; we behold this late powerful Monarch, abandoned to the scanty attentions of two wretched slaves which pity had left to him; and who were considered as polluted by the contamination of the excommunicated pair. Yet in the arms of his beautiful and suffering bride, the persecuted Robert still had his hours of delight: they were now become indeed each others world; and wandering together in the gardens of the palace, they found the heavens as pure, the shades as odorous, and the fruits as sweet, as before the terrible anathema. Interdicted from entering the temples of their God, they raised to him an altar of turf, where, shaded by the branching vines, they offered up prayers which they hoped he would accept. Still did a consuming grief prey upon the beauteous Bertha: the dreadful contest between love and fear undermined her health, and all the hopes of the hapless couple were blasted by her premature delivery of a dead child. Ignorance and superstition attributed this misfortune to the anger of Heaven, and reports were universally

spread that Bertha had produced a monster of hideous deformity. The unpitying Pope, not satisfied with these excesses of sorrow, excommunicated all France, and put the kingdom in interdict. Then desolation and misery were at the height—But, for a picture of this scene of horror, I must refer the reader to the delightful work, which has so carefully collected, and combined so eloquently the different accounts of this direful adventure, and to which I have more than once had occasion to pay my tribute of admiration. The end of this calamitous tale is shortly told. Bertha overpowered by the scenes of suffering of which she knew herself the cause, could no longer resist. A prey to unutterable anguish, she tore herself from the arms of her distracted and heart-broken husband. She took the road to Burgundy, and had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing returning happiness spread itself around; but the blessings and the tears of the crowds which followed her, heightened perhaps the suffering, caused by the frightful contrast of her own feelings.—See *la Gaule poétique*, Tome V. p. 5 to 37.

Note II.

To aid the tulip's gaudy bloom—P. 120.

Since the printing of this passage I find that, in giving the tulip to France at so early a period, I anticipated the fact by nearly two hundred years.

NOTES TO CANTO FIFTH.

Note I.

" A scene of wonder met my stare;
" No form intruded, not a sound
" Ruffled the still but fragrant air, &c.—P. 161.

In these lines I have attempted a description of some of the beauties of those extraordinary caverns, which abound in Turkey in Europe; amongst the properties of which, is not the least remarkable their being generally cool in the summer months, and in winter the reverse. Sonnini makes this observation respecting the grotto at cape Melecca, in which he found the air very sharp and cold, in the month of June, and on repeating his visit in November, there was a powerful heat within the cave, while the atmosphere without was particularly cool. But the most famous of these grottos is that of Antiparos in the Archipelago, of which several descriptions have been published. The account of Magni an Italian traveller by whom it was discovered, is the most ample and interesting, but too long for insertion here.

M^r. Hobhouse gives an account of a cavern somewhat similar in the side of mount Paoné, to which he

and his companions made rather a perilous excursion which he describes with great interest.

Journey through Albania, &c. P. 411.

Note II.

" *A reverend anchorite was he—*
" *His words the breath of sanctity,*
" *His looks like light beyond the grave*—P. 164.

No country, I believe, has such a population of hermits as Turkey in Europe. On the celebrated mount Athos there are a number of cells and grottos with inhabitants of this nature to the amount of several thousands. The proper hermits, who live in grottos, are not above twenty; the other monks are anchorites, or such as live in cells. These monks, who call themselves the inhabitants of the holy mountain, are so far from being a set of slothful enthusiasts, that, besides their daily offices of religion, they cultivate the vines and olives, and even work at different trades. They however lead a very austere life, their usual food being vegetables, dried olives, figs and other fruits, onions, cheese, and on certain days fish. Their temperance, and the healthfulness of the air, renders longevity so common that many of them live above 100 years. The inhabitants of this mountain, from this circumstance, were called by the ancients *Macrobii* or long lived.

NOTES TO CANTO SIXTH.

Note I.

And, by some philtric potion's spell,
Warping the mind of Isabelle.—P. 189.

Philtres or love potions are of ancient notoriety. Caligula (according to Suetonius) received one from his wife Cesonia, whose influence over this remorseless monster might well be looked for in some unnatural cause. The scarcely less odious Isabeau, wife of Charles VI., is said to have had recourse to a *philtre* for the purpose of fixing the affections of the King, previous to his departure on the fatal expedition that lost him his reason.

Note II.

Thy woe is a repulsive theme,
And needs that minstrel, known to fame,—P. 199.

It is scarcely necessary to say that this passage alludes to the celebrated author of the Irish Melodies.

Note III.

Hollow his haggard cheek and wan,
Like to that gaunt, mysterious man,
Whose demon warning in the wood
Roused madness through the monarch's blood.

P. 224.

The extraordinary circumstances attending the loss of reason of Charles VI. was long matter of astonishment and vain enquiry to France. This calamitous event, of such dreadful consequences to the kingdom, occupies the pages of history; but all conjecture, as to the singular and terrific being who caused it, was fruitless. The King having put himself at the head of an army for the purpose of marching to attack the Duke of Brittany, had got as far as Mans, from whence the troops set out on the fifth of August, 1392. The heat was excessive, but the King would notwithstanding continue his route in the hottest part of the day, and had just entered a forest by a narrow road, when, from the midst of a thick copse, a man darted forth, of gigantic stature, nearly naked, with hair disordered and haggard looks. He seized the bridle of Charles, and cried in a sepulchral voice, "King, advance *not!* thou art betrayed." At these words he disappeared. The King was startled but shewed no signs of fear. He passed through the forest maintaining a profound silence, and plunged in a reverie which was for some time uninterrupted. They entered on an extensive and sandy plain, from which the burning heat of the sun was reflected

with a force almost insupportable; when one of the pages, who rode close behind the King, let fall his lance upon the casque of his comrade beside him. The King roused by the noise, believed that the menacing warning of the unknown was really verified. He saw nothing around but treachery and treason. A sudden insanity took possession of him; he furiously drew his sword and struck at all within his reach. From that time, he never entirely recovered his reason.

I subjoin a short abstract of the story on which the preceding Poem is in some degree founded; it is taken from the "*Causes celèbres*" of Gayot de Pitaval, T. I.

Martin Guerre, born in the province of Biscay, was married in the month of January, 1539, to Bertrande de Rols of the town of Artigues; both being at that time extremely young. She united good sense to great beauty, and being somewhat above the rank of peasants, enjoying a moderate fortune, and blessed with a son, they lived very happily together for nearly ten years. About this period Martin being tempted to travel, he quit his wife and family; and left them for a considerable time without any intelligence of him. Bertrande during this period conducted herself without reproach; and at the expiration of eight years Arnaud du Tilh, the impostor, presented himself before her. Bearing the exact resemblance of her husband, he was received by her as such without hesitation, and was immediately acknowledged by the four sisters of Martin Guerre, his

uncle, and other relatives. He had perfectly studied his part, and having known Martin Guerre in his travels, had learned from him and some of his friends, the most minute particulars of his life, and a thousand little secret circumstances, known only to the husband and wife. For three years this impostor lived in possession of all the rights of Martin Guerre, but being at length suspected by the uncle and some others, Bertrande was induced to join in an accusation of him, and he was delivered into the hands of justice. He made a strong defence. One hundred and fifty witnesses were examined, between thirty and forty of whom deposed that he was the true Martin Guerre; a greater number that he was Arnaud du Tilh; and upwards of sixty swore that they could not in conscience say which was the fact. The prisoner was interrogated, and answered with the utmost precision the most particular questions, as to the place of Martin Guerre's birth, his father, mother, brothers, &c.; the day of his marriage, the priest who celebrated the ceremony, the persons who were present, their different dresses, &c. He was, however, after a long trial, found guilty, and condemned to lose his head and have his body quartered. He appealed to the Parliament of Toulouse. This produced a new trial, in which his cause was on the very point of prevailing, had not the real Martin Guerre himself appeared.

Arnaud du Tilh was once more condemned to death; and executed on a gibbet in front of Martin Guerre's house.

THE END.

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